That Most Distressful Country

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/thatmostdistress00boys_1

THAT MOST DISTRESSFUL COUNTRY.

"SELECT" NOVELS.

Crown 8vo, Cloth, 3/6 each.

AT ALL BOOKSELLERS' AND BOOKSTALLS.

By FLORENCE MARRYAT.

THE HEART OF JANE WARNER. | PEERESS AND PLAYER.
UNDER THE LILIES AND ROSES. | FACING THE FOOTLIGHTS.
MY OWN CHILD. | A BROKEN BLOSSOM.
HER WORLD AGAINST A LIE. | MY SISTER THE ACTRESS.

By ANNIE THOMAS (Mrs. Pender Cudlip).

KATE VALLIANT. | ALLERTON TOWERS.
JENIFER. | FRIENDS AND LOVERS.

By LADY CONSTANCE HOWARD.

MATED WITH A CLOWN. | MOLLIE DARLING.
ONLY A VILLAGE MAIDEN. | SWEETHEART AND WIFE.

By MRS. HOUSTOUN, Author of "Recommended to Mercy."

BARBARA'S WARNING.

By MRS. ALEXANDER FRASER.

THE MATCH OF THE SEASON. | A FATAL PASSION.
A PROFESSIONAL BEAUTY.

By IZA DUFFUS HARDY.

ONLY A LOVE-STORY. | NOT EASILY JEALOUS.
LOVE, HONOUR AND OBEY.

By JEAN MIDDLEMASS.

POISONED ARROWS.

By MRS. LOVETT CAMERON.

A DEAD PAST. | A NORTH COUNTRY MAID.

By DORA RUSSELL. OUT OF EDEN.

By LADY VIOLET GREVILLE. KEITH'S WIFE.

By NELLIE FORTESCUE HARRISON,

Author of "So runs my dream."

FOR ONE MAN'S PLEASURE.

By EDMUND LEATHES.

THE ACTOR'S WIFE.

F. V. WHITE & CO., 31, Southampton Street, Strand, W.C.

THAT MOST DISTRESSFUL COUNTRY.

A Novel.

BY

E. C. BOYSE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

London:
F. V. WHITE & CO.,
31, SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND, W.C.
1886.

PRINTED BY
KELLY AND CO., GATE STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, W.C.;
AND MIDDLE MILL, KINGSTON-ON-THAMES.

CONTENTS.

VOL. III.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.		1
II.		10
III.		2
IV.		35
V.		43
VI.		57
VII.		69
VIII.		76
IX.		87
X.		100
XI.		117
XII.		127
XIII.		141
XIV.		155
XV.		165
XVI.		194
XVII.		202
XVIII.		214
XIX.		223

THAT MOST DISTRESSFUL COUNTRY.

CHAPTER I.

"Let us have wine and wassail, mirth and laughter,
Sermons and soda water the day after."

We stopped for dinner later in the afternoon at a good substantial inn, where a liberal meal was set out, to which full justice was done, particularly by Mr. Smith and the jolly coachman, who dined at our table as was customary, Mr. Smith explaining he must provide like Joseph for the time of famine he foresaw on board ship.

Our other passengers left at this town, but several graziers and other men mounted outside, so Mrs. Saville and I had to occupy our proper places inside, and having the coach to ourselves were well off enough.

The good lady took off her bonnet, tied a gorgeous-hued bandana handkerchief over her head, and putting her feet up was soon fast asleep, as her sonorous snores testified.

I sat by the door looking out over the darkening landscape, and watching the waning moon rise. Presently on a hill Mr. Geraldyn let himself down and came to the door. He

smiled as he heard the slumbering music made by my companion, and said:

"Why do you not also take a sleep; you must be tired?"

"I am not particularly, and the air is soft and pleasant by this window."

"Do you mind my coming inside? Shall I disturb you?"

"Oh, no, not at all."

He entered and said:

"I am thankful to get away from the others. Smith is not a bad fellow; but I am weary of his perpetual talk and small jokes."

"A hint to me to hold my tongue," I replied laughing.

"Ah! not at all, Mrs. Gordon; but I am not inclined for any more of the fooling that is going on above; they are making sport with the farmer."

As he spoke peals of laughter resounded from the coach roof, and heavy boots stamped till I thought they would come through; but Mrs. Saville snored on peacefully.

"I have kept my promise and followed your advice, Mrs. Gordon," Mr. Geraldyn said.

"In leaving London. Is it not better to be away from the neighbourhood of Lord Headland?"

"Perhaps; I wish I were out of reach of all other temptation."

"What do you mean?"

"The craving to end it once for all, or to

give way to anything mad just to deaden the pain."

"That would be to prove your love a mere, worthless fancy, and that you yourself were too poor a craven to deserve to win a good woman. I do not believe in the reality of love that debases a man so; probably, if he had not that excuse he would find some other for giving in to his own evil passions."

Like most women when roused, I said more than I meant at first, and stopped feeling ashamed of my own warmth; but Mr. Geraldyn only answered quietly:

"You are not harder on me than I deserve. Tell me, when is the wedding-day?"

"Soon, it is not fixed."

"And she, Kathleen, is happy?"

"Perfectly," I said decidedly.

He said not another word on the subject, but talked of indifferent things till late at night we arrived at Portsmouth; where I was glad enough to go to bed, leaving Mrs. Saville energetically scolding her godson for inviting the others to "go out and make a night of it."

It had been agreed over night that we should breakfast together, and on descending to the sitting-room we occupied next morning, I found three of our party there, but not Mr. Smith.

"Where is Jimmy, I wonder?" quoth Mrs. Saville, dispensing the tea; "he went to

bed early enough not to be so idle this morning."

Captain Grant suddenly rose from his seat, and went to the sideboard to carve some cold beef, and Mr. Geraldyn became much engaged in supplying me with delicate slices of ham.

But Mrs. Saville was not to be deceived.

"Now, Master Cecil," said she, "you're no Geraldyn if you don't know more than your prayers and less than your catechism, so it's no use standing there as if butter would not melt in your mouth. Where is Jimmy, I say?"

"Why, Mrs. Saville, didn't you see him to his room yourself?" asked Cecil demurely.

"I did; and turned the key on him too, and took it away into the bargain; but I ask you, did you see that boy again last night?"

"I went up not half-an-hour later than yourself."

"That's no answer. Do you mean to be all day cutting that beef for me, Captain Grant?"

"I am grieved to be so slow," he said, coming back hastily with a sly glance at Mr. Geraldyn, which was promptly detected by Mrs. Saville.

"Now you two need not think to be taking me in, young men; I can see as far as most folks into a millstone, and you know something about Master Jim. I'll go and see him myself," said Mrs. Saville, rising to put her threat into execution.

"Oh, I would let him alone just now," interposed Captain Grant. "He's not very well, got a headache, 'pon honour, ma'am."

"Went to bed drunk, that means," ejaculated Mrs. Saville wrathfully. "But I locked the door myself."

"Did you lock the window?" said Mr. Geraldyn innocently.

"You don't mean to say that he got out of it, the little rascal. Bless me, who is to be even with the boys? But I'll give it him, as sure as my name's Jemima Saville."

"Be merciful, Mrs. Saville," said Mr. Geraldyn. "Neptune will revenge you to-night if, as I suppose, we shall be afloat."

"I hope so," said Mrs. Saville vindictively, pausing every now and then in her breakfast, to give the table a rap that made the plates and cups rattle, and shake her head ominously over her erring godson.

And when the meal was concluded, though she had been cheery enough over it, she suddenly drew herself up, and stalked off with a portentous frown on her pleasant face.

The young men looked at each other and laughed.

"Poor Jimmy!" said Captain Grant, "he's in for a bad quarter of an hour."

"What was the end of him, Grant?"

"All I know was I heard a confounded row in my passage at daybreak, and looking out, found Smith being borne to bed by

several waiters, whom he was offering to fight collectively, though he was far too drunk to stand."

Mrs. Saville reappearing, rang the bell and ordered some strong tea to be made at once.

"Judgment is to be tempered with mercy," remarked Mr. Geraldyn, apparently addressing himself to a bluebottle on the window.

"Well, dear me, boys will be boys, Master Cecil; I suppose you've heard the chimes ring midnight before now, if you didn't last night."

"That I'll vouch he didn't," remarked Captain Grant. "He would not even have a bowl of punch with me."

"Then you are but a poor trencher-man to-day is all I can say," said Mrs. Saville, who certainly could not be accused of a like failing. "Where's your heart, man?"

"Ask him who the reigning toast of London is, ma'am," said Captain Grant.

"Maybe you can answer that yourself, Grant," said Mrs. Saville knowingly.

"Faith not I; I was just off to town when my recall came, and I was not there at all but for one night."

"Mrs. Gordon is the best authority, as Miss Kavanagh, her sister, is the acknowledged beauty," said Mr. Geraldyn quietly.

"Seeing Mrs. Gordon I can well believe it," said the gallant captain.

"Ah, but she is not the least like me," I

replied, "she resembles my brother far more, who is in the regiment."

"There is a family likeness in voice certainly, if not much in features," said Mr. Geraldyn. "You remind me of Miss Kavanagh often."

"Because we both have a touch of the brogue probably."

"Was your brother that handsome boy who was making such violent love to the bony virgin yesterday?" asked Captain Grant. "I thought then what lovely sisters that fellow should have. Geraldyn, what were you about not to carry her off?"

"Do you think the belle of London would not look higher than myself? She is about to marry the Marquis of Headland."

He had schooled his voice well, there was not a quiver in it as he made this speech; but he turned to the window immediately after, and affected interest in something in the busy street below for a time.

When he turned back to the room again it was to ask if we were not going out. Mrs. Saville had administered her tea and counsel and was quite willing, so we went out and ascertained where our vessel lay, and Mrs. Saville knowing the captain, she and I were allowed to go on, and choose and arrange our cabins, which was a favour we owed to the fact of there being but two of us, so we could agree in the matter.

It was not a long business and we were soon in the bustling streets again, where Mrs. Saville met endless acquaintance in both services, and we were taken to the dock-yards, and many other places.

Captain Grant soon went off with other friends, but Mr. Geraldyn remained and took care of me, glad, I think, to be with some one whom he need not trouble himself to entertain.

The prudent old colonel had timed his march so that he could carry his men straight on board, otherwise, between drinking houses and other temptations, mischief was sure to arise, and the pressgang did not always respect the claims of the rival service.

In spite of their long dusty journey, they came into the town gallantly, played in by the bands of two other regiments stationed at Portsmouth.

A friend of Mrs. Saville's had carried us to her house, which had a balcony under which they must pass, and I felt as proud as possible of belonging to such a fine regiment, and privately concluded there was no man in it to compare to Arthur for a moment, for he was even handsomer than ever in his regimentals, as he marched by with his company, and Larry, who was his subaltern, looking well enough too in his new red coat.

We were down at the quays in time to see the embarkation, for I was smitten with an intensely regimental enthusiasm, and Mrs.

Saville herself could not have been more anxious to be present at everything concerning her dear —th.

Our turn came at last, and we ladies with the three unattached officers went on board, poor Mr. Smith looking a melancholy object after his night's dissipation, and having to run the gauntlet of a tremendous roasting from all his acquaintances.

CHAPTER II.

> "At sunset they began to take in sail,
> For the sky showed it would come on to blow
> And carry away perhaps a mast or so."

THE predicted gale was threatening by night, and when Arthur came to bed he announced we were in for a dirty night, and proceeded to make all our belongings safe, for the vessel was already beginning to pitch and roll.

"There, all is right now, I believe," he said, surveying our small cabin critically; "now for yourself, my darling."

"You can't hang me up to a nail," I said, laughing, for he had driven some in.

"I'll fix you more firmly in that berth though, for fear you are pitched out," he replied. "Let's see; oh, that cashmere shawl will do that Flo gave you."

He took up the long crimson wrap, fastened it ingeniously, so that I and my coverings were secured to the mattress; then taking his own pillow he wedged it in, so that I could not be bruised against the side by any sudden jerk.

"But, Arthur," I remonstrated, "you will want the pillow."

"Not I," he said, "I could sleep on the boards to-night, I am dog tired. We have had a heavy day. Good-night, dear."

And he was asleep in a few minutes; but the novelty of my surroundings kept me awake, and soon the wind blew with redoubled force, and I could feel the great waves come with a sounding crash close to my head; the ship's timbers creaked as she rolled and laboured heavily. Over my berth the sailors' heavy footsteps sounded on deck, and I could hear the hoarse shouting of the ship's officers.

Nearer at hand, too, there were groans and other sounds of misery, proving Neptune was ill-disposed to some of my neighbours, and I was very grateful to be exempt at least from that form of discomfort, though the night seemed very long and dreary, and I half wished Arthur would awake; but he slept on peacefully through all the noise and the violent tossing, evidently so thoroughly tired that I could not disturb him, and at last when a faint glimmering of light showed daybreak was come, I fell asleep myself and awoke to find Arthur had dressed and gone. I had no idea of the hour, but feeling very weary of the four walls of my cabin, resolved to try and dress.

It was no easy matter, and was not accomplished without two or three falls and a bruise or two, but I persevered, and though

shaken and giddy from being knocked about, succeeded in getting attired and coiling my hair up into a knot; just as I was wondering what to do next Arthur re-appeared.

"What, actually dressed?" he cried, "you brave little woman. I swear you will shame half the fellows; but should you not like to get to the air; it is so close here?"

"Indeed I should," I said, for my head was aching and I longed to be on deck.

"Come along," he said promptly, seeing I looked pale. "Here, no hat will keep on, this is better."

He wrapped me up in his own cloak, twisted a crimson silk handkerchief closely over my hair, and almost carried me to the companion, for I had by no means acquired the art of walking safely.

"Sit there, darling, a minute, till I have a chair lashed for you," he said, and returning in five minutes took me on deck.

To my unaccustomed eyes it seemed as if the great ship reared up like a horse and tried to make its way up a perfect mountain of blue water, and as I wondered how I should ever climb such a slope it suddenly descended and went from under my feet till I expected to be left in mid-air, and, half-frightened, I clung to Arthur, but he was as much at ease as if he were in a London street, and before I knew what was happening, had crossed the deck and deposited me safely in a

low, deep chair, in which I felt delightfully safe; and in a few moments I had lost all fear and could enjoy the wind, which was effectually curing my headache, though it reduced my hair to a wild mass of curly untidiness.

"What a nice chair," I exclaimed. "Are they kept on purpose for such days?"

"Not quite, dear. I bought it in London for you and brought it with my baggage."

"How good you were to think of it," I said gratefully. "It's like an ark of safety."

"Good morning, Captain Gordon," said the captain of the ship. "You seem happy enough. Why, God bless me, Mrs. Gordon, ma'am! I never expected to see a lady to-day. I'm delighted to find you so well; why, sir, she is a perfect heroine."

"Aye, I'm proud of her," Arthur replied. "But I want her to have some breakfast at once, captain. Starving is apt to play the mischief."

"The best of everything shall be here in three skips of a herring, ma'am," and actually the good-natured man went off himself to give orders, a great condescension, I felt, on his part.

There were very few officers of the regiment visible, and of these only about a third looked as if they were none the worse for the rough night.

Two or three came up at once to greet me,

including the senior major, who was decidedly cadaverous.

"Mrs. Gordon," he said, after congratulating me, "your husband on land is a good fellow enough, but at sea I positively thirst to slay him, and I believe I am not alone in my desire, for he looks so brutally and offensively hungry, and happy, and healthy he is unbearable."

"I hope you don't include me in those murderous intentions," I answered laughing. "I also like the sea."

"Ah, one would never desire a lady to suffer the slightest discomfort," he said, endeavouring to bow, which was frustrated by a sudden heavy roll of the vessel nearly sending him sprawling. When he recovered his footing he went on:

"As to Gordon, his looks have cost me an appalling amount of hard swearing, and I would give six months' pay to see him seasick."

"You're in a pleasant frame of mind, major," said Arthur, who was just bringing my breakfast. "Have something to eat; Mrs. Gordon will, I am sure, spare you some, sir."

The major swore under his breath and beat a very hasty retreat, as Arthur laughing mischievously, remarked probably to study the beauties of the waves.

"I will kneel down and steady your tray, Bride," he continued. "If I give it to you

its contents will surely be scattered over the deck."

A sailor, however, found him something by way of a seat ; and as the meal provided for me would have been more than ample for three starving men, I made him share it, which, having been up some hours, he was nothing loth to do.

"That's a good child," he said as the tray was dismissed, "I am not afraid for you now."

"Oh, I never felt better in my life Where is every one—they can't all be ill ? "

"A few are at breakfast, but the greater number are groaning below. The colonel has succumbed, I suppose."

"Where is Larry ? "

"On duty ; seeing to the men's breakfasts, &c., and swearing like a trooper in the vilest of tempers, which is an ominous symptom. He and Cis Geraldyn have a very small cabin together, and Cis seems to have gone through his love affairs in his sleep to the detriment of Larry's rest."

"I presume Mr. Geraldyn is a good sailor, as he slept.'

"I asked Larry, who grumbled that he wished to heavens he was sea-sick, it might cure him of being love-sick, that he did not want to hear nothing but Kathleen's name when he longed to go to sleep."

"Poor Larry, it was trying."

"Very, no doubt," said Arthur laughing.

"However, I caught him slurring some of his work, so I came down on him pretty sharply, and left him to get over his grievances as best he could."

"Have you seen Mr. Smith?"

"I should think he is happy, for he was fortifying his nerves last night by pretty copious libations, and just now I saw that little scamp Jack Hunt and another boy proceeding to draw him by taking him a plate of hot fat pork which smelt rather rancid."

"What a refinement of cruelty," I said laughing.

"Yes, and it was good in Master Jack, as last night he was bemoaning his broken-hearted condition in the most high-faluting language over his punch. He is dying for Kathie."

"I was not aware of it."

"Half the fellows on board swear they adored her, and there was a lot of roasting going on last night. I took the first chance of resenting it and putting a stop to it, for Cis Geraldyn was getting hot and I could not tell at what moment he'd fire up, for it went too far."

Arthur was evidently falling into the old school-boy habit of protecting his friend, and when I taxed him with it said:

"It's a relic of that fashion perhaps, dear; Lady Geraldyn commended Douglas and Cis to me when they went first to Eton, two pretty

little fellows mettled as game cocks, Cis especially; his fighting propensities would have got him half murdered by the big bullies if I had not been strong."

"Douglas, is that another son?"

"You must never name him, Bride. He shot himself, it was always spoken of as an accident; but the Geraldyns go to the maddest extremes naturally, and he was the victim of a woman who led him on till he adored her just to pique another man."

"And he?"

"Went headlong into the wildest excesses and committed suicide. His mother knew it, poor soul."

"She spoke to me of losing a brother in a duel, not of a son."

"She was very ill after. I went to his room with her; it was a terrible business. I can't speak of it, it nearly broke her heart. She lost a brother besides."

"Was he older than this son?"

"Yes, a little, and very handsome. That is what makes me anxious about Cecil, but I hope he has more self-control than Douglas had."

I repeated what he had said on the journey and Arthur looked grave.

"I am thankful he has taken you into his confidence, Bride; you do not mind taking pity on him?"

"Oh no, indeed, I am anxious for his mother's sake to do what I can."

"Let him stay with you as much as he will, dear, and if he will talk to you all the better; it is better than brooding."

Larry arrived just as Arthur made his last remark, looking very white and disconsolate.

"Hallo, Larry, I've seen you looking happier," said Arthur laughing.

"You may say that and tell no lie," he replied. "Confound this beastly rolling old tub; I'm as near dead as makes no difference, and as if one wasn't bad enough without, to have to be the one on duty below with no air at all but a stink of bilge water."

"And some of the work twice over," remarked Arthur in an aggravating tone.

"Yes, you unfeeling baste, and you standing there chuckling at making me do it, just as if——"

At this point a terrific roll cut short Larry's list of grievances by making him measure his length on the deck, to the delight of Mr. Hunt and several others who were coming up noisy and merry fresh from the persecution of the unfortunate Mr. Smith; they obligingly offered to fetch Larry some of the same delicacy they had offered him.

"I'll swear I'll pitch you over if you do, Jack Hunt," growled Larry, who was sitting on the deck looking around him. "Sure, Bride, 'tis something to have a sister who is a kind of fixed axis round which this moving world revolves."

And availing himself of the fact Larry crawled up to me and made himself as comfortable as he could by leaning against me, steadying himself by an arm round my waist, which suited his convenience as the chair was so low that he could still sit on the deck.

"I wonder you can look me in the face this morning, Cis," he went on as Mr. Geraldyn strolled up to join us looking very contented and keeping his footing perfectly as he bowed to me.

"Why shouldn't I gaze on you, though you are not an exhilarating spectacle, Larry?"

"Who would be after being kept awake all night by another fellow talking in his sleep?"

"Did I talk? What about?" demanded Mr. Geraldyn abruptly.

"Some rubbish or another, man, of course. Sure I didn't listen; but I just threw every boot I'd got at you, and when that didn't stop you—why, I threw the rest of my boots."

A roar of laughter, and shouts of "Bravo, Paddy!" greeted this announcement.

"Laugh away, gentlemen, I'm glad to be the means of divartin' you," growled Larry.

"Well now," remarked Cecil, "it struck me we must have had a singularly rough night when I woke, for I believe every movable article in the cabin was in my berth. You must have taken terribly poor aim, Larry, not to hit me."

"It's not so easy to shy straight, when you don't know if you're on your head or your heels for the tossing, and the lights are out, and the other fellow's voice sounds all over the place, and you don't know whether the next roll won't finish yourself off altogether."

"Had any breakfast, Kavanagh?" demanded some one.

"Of course not, and I don't want any," retorted the much-aggravated Larry; "Cis, I don't know which I hate most, you or Arthur there, you aggravative divils, and Hunt's as bad, standing there balancing yourselves as aisy as hens on a perch."

Of course Larry's speech led to more efforts of provocation, Mr. Geraldyn declaring there was nothing in life to prevent a minuet being danced, a suggestion which so delighted young Hunt and two or three more wild boys, they endeavoured to carry out the idea, when wave breaking over knocked them all down, a triumph for Larry which went far to redress his wrongs.

"I am afraid you'll have to take refuge below, Bride, if that goes on," Arthur said, as the two sailors handily mopped the water up.

"Oh, it is so much nicer here," I pleaded, for the smell of cooking, lamp oil, and other indescribable mixtures of unpleasant odours, did not commend themselves to my recollections.

"I do not want to disturb you," he said,

"but I want to go down myself, to see how the colonel and some of the others are getting on. Larry, will you be answerable for Bride's well-being?"

"Sure and how can you ask such a thing of a fellow that has been t'other side up, and inside out, and back before, for twenty hours at least, and couldn't be answerable for his own legs or vitals, let alone his neighbour's wife's?"

"One would think you were the Grand Turk, and had a dozen, Gordon," remarked Mr. Hunt.

"Trust Mrs. Gordon to me, I will take every care of her," said Mr. Geraldyn.

"Now the words were on the tip of my own tongue," said Mr. Hunt, "and I'm the right man, for isn't she one of our regiment?"

Two or three others volunteered, so seeing I had no lack of protectors, Arthur went off, and my companions proceeded to extemporize seats with whatever they could lay hands on.

Larry appropriated my footstool in brotherly fashion, and nestling himself closer to the chair, pillowed his curly head against me, and drew my arm about his neck, saying with a laugh:

"It's my turn now, Bride, now that big captain is out of the way. Faith, I've had him down my throat once to-day."

"I daresay you richly deserved it," I said stroking his curls.

"It's no use asking you to belave any other," he answered. "Sure if he says the sea's made of treacle, you'll uphold him."

"Maybe we'd get an easier voyage if it were," said someone.

Larry opined it was as bad as could be now; laid his head back, and actually went fast asleep, as his regular breathing showed.

"His weight will tire you, Mrs. Gordon," Cecil said. "Now he is asleep, he rests it all on you. Let me move him a bit."

"Oh no," I said, "I wouldn't disturb him; he will not sleep long I daresay."

"He is much to be envied," said Mr. Hunt, trying to look sentimental and failing, as his face strongly resembled a jolly little terrier's, adding with a sigh, "In dreams we forget our griefs."

"You've so many, Jack," laughed another young fellow. "Are you hard up?"

Not deigning any answer, Mr. Hunt contemplated Larry with his head posed on one side and said:

"He is painfully like—another."

"There's a squall coming up," said Cecil suddenly. "Go to the captain, like good fellows, quick, and get a sail or tarpaulin; it will be a drencher."

Forgetting all his woes Mr. Hunt shouted:

"Bet you a bowl of punch I'm there first!"

Off they raced under difficulties, as the ship

seemed rolling worse than before, and they had plenty of falls.

Larry slept on; and softened by sleep and paler than usual, his remarkable likeness to Kathleen was so unusually strong, that I did not wonder that Mr. Geraldyn stood silently looking down at him, till the first raindrops recalled his wandering thoughts; when, in spite of my objections, he took off his own cloak, and sheltered me till the others ran back with so ample a tarpaulin, that by its breadth we were all kept dry till the short, heavy storm went over.

"Well, that fellow is making up his arrears, anyhow," Mr. Geraldyn said as they all emerged and saw Larry still sleeping. "Mrs. Gordon, you are spoiling him and tiring yourself."

"I shall survive," I said laughing; "and I don't have my boy so very often nowadays to make much of."

Finding me unpersuadable, Mr. Geraldyn asked permisson to go and smoke, and Mr. Hunt remained in charge of me.

"Did you know I adored your sister?" he asked.

"How often did you see her? Twice? I think you'll get over it," I said, stifling a laugh at his funny little dog face and snub nose, which did not lend itself to his would-be-pathetic expression. Detecting my amusement he laughed a little too.

"You are too bad, Mrs. Gordon. I give you my word, her glance shot right through my waistcoat straight to my heart."

"Did you have to send to the tailor to finedraw the hole?"

"Oh! don't be so cruel. Don't you see I'm pining away rapidly? She's got more victims on board," he went on knowingly; "and I'll bet you that's one," giving a nod in the direction where Mr. Geraldyn paced the deck smoking.

A sudden thought struck me, and I said confidentially:

"I wonder if you'd grant me a favour if I asked it?"

"Anything, by the honour of the Hunts!"

"Well, sir, I always heard you had more influence than any other subaltern in the regiment."

Mr. Hunt assumed an air of modest worth, which sorely tried my gravity.

"Now I don't like quite so much jesting as I know goes on about my sister, and it must be heartrending to you—and any other who wears the willow—so I want you to put a stop to it."

"Give you my word I will, now," he said, proud of the commission. "Though somehow, Mrs. Gordon, I don't fancy it's my feelings you're quite so tender over in the matter."

"It's my own I am thinking of," I said

truthfully enough, for Arthur's story had given me an indefinable dread about Mr. Geraldyn, and it would be better for him if the teasing ended.

"May I never deserve your favour more if I don't carry out your wishes to the very letter," he said, and I knew I had obtained a valuable if unconscious ally.

CHAPTER III.

"There winds and waves had hurled them,
And from thence,
Without their will they carried them away."

LARRY slept on till my arm grew painfully benumbed; but I could not find heart to wake the boy, it was like a bit of home-life to do something for him once more, and I sat dreaming of home and the old arm-chair where I had often "made a lap" for him before when he was tired or lazy. At last, however, he awoke with a stretch and a yawn.

"Well, Kavanagh, you have had a pretty long sleep," said Mr. Geraldyn. "Mrs. Gordon looks quite weary."

"Have I tired you quite out, Bride darling? Sure I never meant to be bothering you so, but I have had a foine sleep entirely, and I'm my own man again now. You shouldn't have kept me there to tire your arm Bride, though."

"I wanted to turn you off ages since, but Mrs. Gordon flatly refused."

"Cecil, my friend, whisht now, and I tell you something. This sister of mine never likes her friends half so well as when they're

imposing on her good-nature. Wait till you are sick or sorry and you'll prove it."

"I can believe it now," Mr. Geraldyn said quietly.

Larry arose and with another mighty stretch remarked he ailed nothing now but starvation.

Other people seemed similarly affected by the keen salt air, so Mr. Geraldyn volunteering to go and cater, an extempore species of picnic was speedily provided, which attracted by degrees all who were well enough to eat, and as more arrived they had to find themselves more provisions; and plenty of fun ensued, for it was by no means easy to convey food safely to the mouth when balanced insecurely on a box or stool, which might at any instant slide across the deck with treacherous rapidity.

Arthur joined us at last.

"Boys, boys," he said, merrily, "I've seen a stupendous sight."

"What was it?" shouted several.

"The say sarpent," suggested Larry.

"A whale or a flying fish," suggested some one else.

"Try again, boys. Give it up? Mammy Saville without her wig!"

A storm of questions and laughter greeted this announcement; when the noise subsided, Arthur went on.

"The colonel was groaning on his back in

the saloon, and as cross as a bear naturally, and as I went by their cabin, mammy called out, 'Who's that?' 'Arthur Gordon, ma'am,' 'Come here, Gordon.' So I opened the door an inch, being a naturally modest youth. 'Come in, man; God bless my heart and life,' she shouted, 'don't be so bashful; you're as much married as the rest of us; I suppose it's not the first time you've seen a woman in her bedcap and without her wig?' but I give you my word, boys, that Minerva's helmet is a joke to the awful article that crowned her head; half a dozen frills at least, surmounted by the black band and the warrior cameo."

"Faith I've seen it," said Jack Hunt. "When I was ill last year she sat up with me for a week, and it used to go on over the wig though."

"The wig hung up on a nail. She remarked it was convenient, and she feared Mrs. Gordon's hair must be a trouble as it was so long."

"I think the wig would be handy on board ship," I said, glancing at my rebellious locks which were now hanging all over my shoulders.

"What was the object of your visit?" asked Mr. Geraldyn. "She surely did not only wish you to admire her in deshabille?"

"No, no; the fact was the treacherous S—— as she calls him had promised to send her some tea with a dash of brandy, and a few other comestibles, and instead he had gone off

to bewail himself, and their servant is helplessly ill, and so she was deserted, poor old soul."

"Have you been waiting on her? Why did you not call me?" I said.

"I offered your services, but she seemed to think mine as much to the purpose, so I did my best, and was told I was a good boy and a credit to the regiment; but I'm afraid the colonel will get hot tongue for his supper."

"Who else have you seen, and where is the doctor?"

"Got his hands full. One of the men's wives hurt herself badly in a fall, so I held her arm while he set it, and I have seen all the fellows below; Jimmy Smith is a warning; he's appealing to the world generally to throw him in the sea; the major is only half a shade better I think. Hark, what's that? Heavens! a man overboard."

With one general impulse we rushed to the side, with half the crew and the ship's officers.

A man had fallen from the rigging, and his despairing face appeared for an instant in the surging, boiling sea.

"He's a doomed man!" cried the captain; "nothing can save him, no boat can live an instant;" yet as he spoke he tried to throw a rope.

The effort cleared back the crowd from that spot for a moment, and with a sudden

spring Cecil Geraldyn was on the bulwark and threw off his coat and waistcoat.

"Cecil, it's suicide: for God's sake, don't," Arthur shouted with a vain endeavour to stop him; but with a brave smile on his fair face Mr. Geraldyn dashed into that awful seething chaos of waters, and disappeared under it, but in an instant his bright curls showed only again.

He had measured his distance wonderfully, and was close to the drowning man, whom he seized by the collar.

"He shall not perish before one's eyes," Arthur exclaimed. "Larry, hold Bride safe."

And pushing me into Larry's arms he swung himself over the ship's side, followed by several sailors, while in an agony of fear and apprehension we all leant over, half-blinded by the spray that dashed in our faces to watch those who were in little less danger than the two actually in the sea, for every moment it seemed as if they must be torn from the chains or ropes they clung to.

There was one last faint hope that Mr. Geraldyn and his now helpless burthen might be drifted within reach.

Ropes, boxes, anything that would float, had been thrown out vainly, and it was clear all power of guiding his course was beyond Mr. Geraldyn's strength in the fearful resistless force of the cruel waves which drifted

their victims hither and thither as if in mockery.

Once—twice they were almost in reach, so near that I could distinctly see Cecil Geraldyn's face with the bright brave smile on it still, though it was plain his strength was almost gone.

Larry drew me back sharply as another wave dashed up, and, still blinded with the water in my eyes, I heard a shout.

One of the sailors had made a lucky snatch, and his comrade's dripping body was being passed up on deck, saved—at least, if life were in it still.

I could see nothing of Mr. Geraldyn, but Arthur and two or three sailors were still leaning down recklessly, gazing into the depths of the water. Suddenly, far below the surface, it seemed to me the golden hair showed faintly.

I saw Arthur throw himself forward with a desperate effort, the sailors grasping the rope he had on him.

And in another instant from a hundred throats a wild exulting cheer rang out. Soldiers and sailors of all ranks vied with each other in lending a hand to drag up the gallant rescuers and their prize.

Arthur was the last to be brought over the ship's side, with his friend's body held tightly in his arms lest again it might be snatched from his strong grasp by the pitiless waves.

And as he came on deck another triumphant shout was raised in his honour, but not seeming to hear it, he exclaimed :

"Keep back, men, keep back. Send up the doctor, quick!"

And laying down the inanimate form very tenderly, he bent over it anxiously.

The captain and officers of the ship formed a ring round, forcing back those who would have pressed forward.

There was a breathless silence till the doctor bustled up. I could not see for the crowd about me, all eager to catch a glimpse of what was passing, but I heard Dr. Probyn say hastily :

"Bring him below at once. Not you, Gordon—a sailor, less chance of a fall. Here, you, my man."

The man chosen stepped forward—a great powerful fellow, envied at the moment by half his comrades. He lifted Mr. Geraldyn as easily as if he were a child, and, as he stepped carefully across the deck with the head resting on his shoulder, we could see the fair hair was all stained with blood, and pitying murmurs arose.

"They've had their work for nothing. Dashed against the ship's bottom. Skull fractured."

"'Tis a pity, Jack, he wor a good 'un."

"T'other warn't far behind him."

With these and other similar comments the

crowd dispersed, the sailors to their business, the soldiers ordered back to their quarters. In a few moments the deck was as usual, but for a crimson stain that was being wiped away.

"Come back to your chair, Bride," Larry said authoritatively.

True to his charge he had never left my side.

Mr. Hunt came up and offered his help also and we returned to the place where the remains of plates and glasses, broken and unbroken, told of the sudden and awful interruption to our merriment.

I saw the wine-bottle still as Mr. Geraldyn had left it, ingeniously secured. Larry took it up and, pouring out some, said curtly:

"Drink that, Bride."

I obeyed him almost mechanically, and he said kindly:

"Poor little sister! No wonder you were frightened about Arthur, but it's all right now."

"Wasn't it splendid—glorious?" broke out Mr. Hunt enthusiastically. "Oh, I wish I had been one of them to save a fellow-creature from the deep!"

"I doubt you're being equal to the occasion, Jack," Larry remarked drily. "If Gordon hadn't tremendous muscles he'd never have held Geraldyn against that undersuck."

"Several men got hold of the sailor at once, I fancy."

They chatted on and I sat listening to them, recovering myself, and wondering when we should hear any report of the rescued men.

Presently the kindly captain came up to see if I was all safe. He said the sailor had recovered very well, but that, so far, they could say little about Mr. Geraldyn's condition; and he shook his head sadly, saying it was a splendid thing on his part, but he feared the young gentleman had sacrificed himself.

CHAPTER IV.

"Woman's the sufferer's general blessing,
From sultry India to the Pole."

A DRIZZLING thick rain set in steadily, so that at last I was driven to take refuge in the saloon.

A good many officers were there, lounging about, many looking very miserable and sea-sick. Courteous as they were, I felt very much in the way. Arthur was with Mr. Geraldyn, of whom every one spoke as if there were small ground for hope of his recovery.

Larry had disappeared in his usual erratic fashion, and, growing more and more shy, I determined to seek refuge in my own cabin. The gale was abating, and I could walk without help along the passage to it; but on opening the door, I was surprised to find it occupied, and shut the door again hastily, without seeing who was there; but Arthur came out at once, saying:

"Bride, I had no time to consult you, everything had to be done in haste. But I have given up your berth to Geraldyn, as it was about the best on board, and we could think of no other plan. You do not mind?"

"Of course I do not. How is he?"

"Not drowned, certainly, but still insensible."

"All depends on nursing," said the doctor, joining us.

"You will not leave him, of course?" said Arthur anxiously.

"My good sir, by bad luck, as you know, I'm the only medical on board, and I have a woman in imminent danger, to whom alone I can be of help."

"I will stay with him, then," replied Arthur.

"You? What do you know of nursing?" replied the doctor crushingly. "It must be some one tender and soft-voiced, but firm and self-reliant. Even at the best he will suffer severely, and want the most skilful tending."

"I don't believe there is a man here that is all you want, doctor."

"He can't see anything that is not under his nose," soliloquized the doctor, adding, "Did I ever say a man was wanted at all?"

"What, in Heaven's name, else do you want?" said Arthur irritably.

"A woman, of course."

"A woman?" repeated Arthur, apparently more puzzled than before.

"Yes; your wife is one, is she not?"

"Why on earth did you not say so before?" exclaimed Arthur.

"Well, really, I fancied you must be aware of it," said the doctor drily.

"Oh, confound you, doctor! I mean, why did you not explain you wanted her as nurse?"

"I was bound first to inquire if she were willing. What do you say yourself, madam, to the proposal?"

"I am quite willing, if you think me capable."

"Perfectly, after all your nursing of that long fellow there, who might have known no one but a woman would have done half so much for him. Geraldyn will be in sore need of feminine gentleness and pity. Of course, he is crossed in love, too, and despondent. I wish there were no women," added the doctor savagely.

"What gratitude, doctor, when you've just confessed a woman's help is necessary," I said.

"Eh! Well, I never said anything else, did I? Come, when will you begin nursing?"

"I am ready now."

"No; eat your dinner first. When was your last meal?"

At the time of the accident."

"Nearly four hours ago. Gordon, see she has some wine too."

We left the doctor, hearing a parting soliloquy of:

"Silent, obedient, sensible. Well, the biggest fools have the best luck."

"That polite speech alludes to my fright, which the doctor can't forgive," Arthur said smiling. "Bride, you have been hurried into

this almost without notice. Is it too much to ask you to undertake?"

"I would do it for any one," I replied, "and much more for your friend."

"Aye," he said, "I know many wiser, better fellows than Cis, but somehow he has a hold on me no one else has."

I was soon established with my charge, who lay quietly, as if sleeping, but for an occasional restless moan, showing that he was growing conscious of pain.

No doubt he had been dashed against the ship, and had narrowly escaped a fracture of the skull.

There might be other injuries, for every now and then a slight stain of blood showed on his lips.

The gale was rising again after a short lull. I could feel the ship rolled and laboured heavily, for the wind was nearly ahead. There was something very mournful in the heavy dash of the waves, the howl of the wind, and the perpetual creaking of the timbers. Other noises there were, too, such as no one can realize who has not been alone at sea in a storm. All the movable articles in the cabin swung till they made me dizzy, and, provoked beyond endurance, I took them down and piled them in the spare berth.

Mr. Geraldyn began to talk, evidently fancying himself urging his suit once more; his eyes were open, and as I bent over him he

laid his head on mine, saying, "Surely this is not another dream come to torment me? For pity's sake, speak, if it is you, Kathleen."

"I am Mrs. Gordon," I said slowly. The name reached his dulled senses, and he raised himself a little, but with an exclamation of "Oh, what pain!" fell back on his pillows pressing his hand to his head. I bathed his temples, and presently he said gently, "Larry was right; one must be sick or sorry to know your kindness, but I am overtaxing you. Some one else could come."

I told him decidedly he was in my charge for the night, and no change could be made.

"I am selfish enough to be glad," he replied. "I should find it hard to bear a less tender touch and voice."

His mind was perfectly clear, showing no injury had been done to the brain, but every sense appeared painfully acute, and the perpetual noise jarred terribly on his tortured nerves. He remembered everything that had occurred till he sank for the last time, and said he had tried to cling, he believed, to the ship, but she came down on him like a vast black wall, and he knew no more, but his hands were cut and torn with the struggle he had had to hold on.

"What was the end?" he asked.

"I hardly know myself, but I believe Arthur dived with a rope round him, and the men hauled you both out."

"I am glad he succeeded, for now he will feel all was done even if I die," Mr. Geraldyn said quietly. "Am I in danger, Mrs. Gordon?"

"I hope not," I answered. "It is hard to tell how much you are hurt."

"My head is the worst," he said, hardly able to keep back a sound of pain as the ship lurched suddenly. "But I suppose something else is wrong," he added, putting his handkerchief to his mouth, and showing me that it was stained with blood.

"You must try to live; do not give in, Mr. Geraldyn," I said, knowing how much it would be against him if he did not care.

"I am content either way," he replied gently. "I did long to let myself sink and end all the pain; but it would have been cowardly, and there was something good in fighting that sea for one's own life and the other."

His face lighted up as it had done when he dashed into the water; but weakness and pain overcame him again.

Surely no more inconvenient place was ever invented than that ship's berth for a man to lie in who could hardly bear the gentlest handling.

I had thought the shed where Arthur lay so long a very comfortless sick chamber; but it was far beyond this, and the close atmosphere of the unventilated cabin oppressed my patient.

Worst of all was the violent pitching. It required the more watchful care and ingenuity to shield him from any sudden chance, for a slight blow to the injured head might prove most dangerous.

I could but be thankful we were both excellent sailors, and he bore all his suffering with the utmost patience, though it and the want of sleep were wearing him out, and it was pitiful to watch the lines of weariness and pain deepening on his boyish face, as hour after hour went by and the noise and motion increased rather than diminished.

He seemed to have little power of holding out, and grew weaker rapidly. Altogether I began to lose hope and was always grateful when the doctor paid a short visit, though I read that he was anxious.

"Gordon is lying down at the door," the doctor said to me aside. "Do you want help?"

"No, I can do best alone. Another person would worry him. Unless the sea calms, or by a miracle he sleeps, how will it be?"

"We shall both lose our patients," he said; and then, seeing that I was grieved, he added kindly, "You are doing admirably, you may succeed yet; he has strength still."

Very little, it seemed to me; and though he passively took whatever I gave him, there was evident difficulty in swallowing.

"Mrs. Gordon," he said at last, "do you

remember Mr. Power's death? Kathleen regretted him, will she do as much for me?"

"I hope we need not think of that," I answered.

"If I could sleep," he sighed. "I am *so* tired. Ah! thunder at last."

The intensely close heat had been indicative of a thunder-storm, and now the heavy peals succeeded each other with startling rapidity, their vibration trying Mr. Geraldyn's head more almost than he could bear. I feared he would lose consciousness again from the intense pain; but fortunately the thunder was too violent to last, and when at last the torrents of rain came down, with renewed hope I thought they might beat down the sea, and we should have less violent motion.

The air seemed cooler, too, as the rain poured on, and, to my great delight, Mr. Geraldyn said at last he was growing sleepy, and closed his eyes wearily. Screening the light I sat by him, listening anxiously for any sound indicative of sleep, and at last, when his breathing grew soft and regular, I cautiously let the light fall on him again, fearing I was mistaken; but, to my joy, I saw the pain-tightened lips had relaxed, and he was asleep at length.

CHAPTER V.

"But he who stems a stream with sand,
Or fetters flame with flaxen band,
Has yet a harder task to prove,
By firm resolve to conquer love."

It was long before I ventured to move, but at last, opening the door noiselessly, I called Arthur. He sprang up hastily, and I whispered:

"Go and tell Dr. Probyn that Mr. Geraldyn is asleep."

"Thank God!" he answered earnestly. "I dreaded very different news. Probyn thought him sinking fast when he left you last time."

A message came back that I must stick to my post, which I was willing enough to do; indeed, my patient's gratitude and bravely-borne suffering had won on me, and I should have been sorry to give up the charge till assured he was really safe.

Dr. Probyn came before long.

"My work is done," I said, pointing to my charge rather triumphantly.

"So is mine," said the doctor sadly. "Mother and child both dead. I can't spare you here yet. You must stay till he awakes; that is, if you are not over-tired?"

"Oh no! and it is so much quieter."

"The wind is astern, not ahead now, and the sea going down. Would you like some coffee?"

I said I should, and after drinking it, watched on, thankful to see how sound Mr. Geraldyn's sleep was. When at last he awoke he looked so intensely astonished at my presence that I felt rather shy. Then with a smile he said:

"I remember now. Oh, Mrs. Gordon, are you still here? How tired you must be! Why didn't you go to your berth?"

As the strongest reason for my not doing so was that he occupied it himself, I felt myself blushing; then it struck me as so extremely comic that I began to laugh. Up till that moment he had not realized where he was, but I suppose he observed sundry feminine possessions, which certainly were not his nor Larry's, and a light dawned on him suddenly. With the utmost dismay he cried:

"Oh, Mrs. Gordon, this must be your cabin! I am so ashamed and sorry. I had no idea. Do have me moved!"

"I shall do nothing of the sort," I said. "You are most welcome to it; only I could not help laughing, you were so unconscious of your whereabouts." Recovering my sense of my duty I questioned him as to his improvement, and was fairly satisfied that he was past the worst.

So the next thing was to cater for his

breakfast, and Arthur being still outside despatched his servant, and then came in himself by permission. Being an Englishman he was of course tongue-tied; but the tone of his "Well, Cecil!" spoke perhaps as eloquently as the most fluent words could have done.

Mr. Geraldyn eagerly begged Arthur to insist on my resting, and the latter said laughingly:

"What tyrannies you must have inflicted on your victim, Bride, as he is so desirous of getting rid of you at the first opportunity."

Mr. Geraldyn answered so indignantly that Arthur said:

"Gently, my dear boy, or you will get me into a scrape in a minute for making you talk. Don't distress yourself, Cis, Mrs. Gordon can have half the berths on board, the subs having been taken chivalrous for the first time in their lives have a bad attack, and are inclined to fight an octagonal duel for the honour of giving up to her. Here is your breakfast. Will you trust me to lift him, Bride?"

Mr. Geraldyn dreaded his doing so very visibly; but Arthur was deft and gentle, as well as strong, and lifting him with no unnecessary pain, supported him for the few minutes which sufficed for the slight meal, and laid him down again, saying:

"You may trust me, Cis, it's not so long

since I feared awkward handling myself. What a blessing your brother was to me, with his strength and tenderness, Bride."

"Do you mean Larry?" asked Mr. Geraldyn.

"Good heavens—no! Larry's one attempt was to drop a lighted candle and shower of melted wax on to an open wound," Arthur said, laughing at the remembrance.

I was tidying the cabin to the best of my abilities, and came on a handful of Mr. Geraldyn's fair, silky curls, which had been cut off and thrown aside in examining his hurt.

"I shall send these to Lady Geraldyn," I said, showing them.

"Aye, do," Arthur replied; "she'll prize them if you tell her those yellow locks saved his life. It's quite true, Cis; darker hair would not have showed through those rough waves."

"Really?"

"No; as that great fellow that stood by me on the chains said after to me, 'You'd a been in Davy Jones' locker, sir; it's his luck. He was a towy-headed 'un, so we could spot him through the water.'"

I had not felt how tired I was till I laid down; but the exertion of keeping one's balance all through a rough night under such circumstances is not inconsiderable. When I did come on deck again, the sea was fairly

calm, and nearly every one was out enjoying the sunshine, including Mrs. Saville, who jumped up and greeted me with a resounding kiss.

"My dear," she exclaimed, "I never was so vexed in my life as to feel myself a useless old fool last night when that lad wanted a nurse. And when S—— told me you were gone to him, I said, 'As sure as my name's Jemima Saville, that girl will fill my shoes when I'm dead and buried, and I shall leave the regiment in good hands.'"

Though on inquiry I heard Mr. Geraldyn was considered out of any imminent danger, he was still ill enough to require care, and even when all acute symptoms were reduced, his recovery was tedious, for he had in his battle with the waves ruptured some small blood-vessel, and strained himself so that he had to submit to remaining perfectly still, without being even allowed to raise himself in his berth. He accepted the doctor's order passively and obeyed it to the letter, which probably no other man of his age on board would have done without rebelling at the tedium of such inaction.

How much he suffered it was impossible to ascertain; he never complained, and showed no sign of pain by word or look, though doubtless he had a great deal to bear; but he was very reluctant to answer any questions.

For all his friends' attentions he was grate-

ful, though many of their well-meant attempts must have hurt him very unnecessarily.

Arthur, however, devoted every leisure hour to the care of him; the old affection seemed to have revived between them doubly, and no woman could have been more kind and tender than Arthur became. The great, powerful sailor whose life Mr. Geraldyn had saved almost adored him with a curious, dog-like worship. He was unable to swim, and had considered himself a lost man when he fell overboard, and seemed, when first taken to see Mr. Geraldyn, unable to realize that his preserver was really the slight, golden-haired, white-handed young officer lying in the berth, but exclaimed bashfully, to Arthur's amusement:

"Lord, sir, surely I be in the wrong cabin? this here is a young lady's, b'aint 'un?"

However, when reassured on that point, he expressed his gratitude in honest, manly fashion, explained he had a wife and "little 'un" at home who would have missed him sadly, and proved himself so handy that, to his excessive delight, he was allowed to do a good deal for Mr. Geraldyn, who saw how much it pleased the honest fellow to be asked to lift or wait on his hero.

That I should also take a large share of nursing was only natural. But though I was so much with Mr. Geraldyn, he said little more of Kathleen. It was clear he was

striving to bear his trouble bravely and uncomplainingly as he endured his physical suffering.

The winds were contrary, and our voyage by no means quick or smooth; but we were nearing Ireland and our port before Mr. Geraldyn came on deck again.

He was gentle, courteous, and pleasant as usual, but something of his bright boyishness was gone, and he seemed graver and more manly, though the difference was hardly definable.

In truth he had gained no inconsiderable victory over himself during his solitude and suffering. In all his brilliant, petted life he had never been really in earnest, or strangely moved over anything before, but had gone on from day to day, merely trying to enjoy life's pleasures, and avoid all disagreeables.

Society had made much of him for his charming manners and good looks; even the want of money had never been much annoyance to him; a lucky run at cards or some other chance had always enabled him to keep afloat.

Except the very short campaign in Wexford, his greatest military effort had been a review. As he said of himself, he was a regular carpet-knight, and all his abilities were unused through indolence.

The sudden and intense passion for Kathleen awoke him from his careless ease,

coming on him with an irresistible force which he had not known himself capable of, and when it was followed by the crushing blow of her scornful rejection of his suit, he was like a vessel drifting about at the mercy of a wild storm in the conflict of his feelings.

Out of such trials a man cannot come without some change either for good or evil, and it was a providence that threw him in Arthur's way in the crisis; for though never a word passed between them about Kathleen after the repulse, he was alive to the endeavour to help him, and the solicitude for him which had been more easy to make manifest in the unwearying and affectionate care with which Arthur tended him while he needed it, than in any words.

We were running easily with a fair wind at last, over a bright, sunny sea, and the coast was plainly visible. I was watching the gulls and laughing with some of "the boys," as Larry and his associates were usually termed, when Arthur called me across the deck to where he stood by Mr. Geraldyn, who was lounging comfortably on a rug.

"This young man has been pleased to try and arrange to honour us by exchanging into ours," Arthur said.

"Has arranged, you should say. Saville does not object, and our colonel would be sure to like having Methuen in my place."

"Methuen's his nephew, isn't he? and he's one of our best youngsters, Cis. Alas!"

"That sounds as if Gordon has a poor opinion of my qualifications," said Mr. Geraldyn turning to me.

"His speech had scarcely a complimentary flavour," I replied laughing; "but there is a proverb about the cap fitting."

"That's too bad, Mrs. Gordon. I hoped you would defend your patient."

"Oh! you're out of my hands now; but you had better prove yourself a model subaltern."

"An example to Larry and Jack," said Arthur. "Between their monkey tricks and your laziness, ours will be a model regiment, anyhow."

"I got over Saville by telling him I wanted to be with you, and of course Mrs. Gordon also."

"Thank you, sir," I said, making him a courtesy. "How much of the compliment may I take to myself?"

"As much as I may dare to hope you will accept, for I have no words that would express all I feel, Mrs. Gordon."

"Well, Cis, you bate the world, as Larry says," remarked Arthur laughingly. "Have you any more pretty speeches to make to my wife, sir?"

"No; I only make pretty speeches to people I don't really care for. I am too

sincerely grateful to Mrs. Gordon to pay her empty compliments," said Mr. Geraldyn, adding suddenly, "Larry, will you be pleased to fall overboard, not on me."

"Do you want another chance of distinguishing yourself?" called back Larry, who was performing perilous feats in the rigging overhead.

"My good fellow, you're not born to be drowned; don't fancy I'm going through all that exertion for you."

"And you will make a great splash, which would be too much for Mrs. Saville's nerves," added Arthur, for the good lady had just arrived.

"Nerves? Nonsense, Gordon, I'm not such a simpleton. Larry Kavanagh, come down this instant. How dare you try to break your neck up there? If you don't come down, as sure as my name's Jemima Saville, I will——"

"No don't, pray don't. I couldn't bear it," said Larry, dropping down at her feet, and going through an absurd pantomime of crying and rubbing his fists in his eyes. "I didn't do it at all, and I'll niver do it again, ma'am."

"Oh, you silly boy, be off, do," the old lady said laughing; "you're enough to try any one's patience. I wonder Gordon puts up with you as he does."

"Sure, I just get behind his wife's apron

when I'm very much frightened, and she protects me," replied Larry confidentially. "Do come and have a swing, Mrs. Saville. I'll find you a safe rope." And active as a squirrel, he was off into the rigging again before she could answer.

"Well, what do you say to the proposed change, Mrs. Saville? Of course you know it?" asked Arthur.

"I should rather suppose I do. S—— doesn't take such steps without talking to me."

"I hope you don't object to me?" said Mr. Geraldyn smiling.

"Ask me that six months hence, young gentleman, and I'll tell you," said Mrs. Saville, regarding him through a pair of silver-rimmed spectacles severely and fixedly. "Just now I don't know much of you, but your fair face and your soft ways, for when I did a turn of nursing you, a Red Indian could not have been more silent. Most boys make more moan if their little finger aches. I'll tell you the best I know of you so far."

"Please do, madam."

"Just this. I'm not going to say a word about you fetching that sailor out of the sea. It may have been the deliberate act of a brave man. Or it may," here Mrs. Saville paused to point her words, "it may have been the rash impulse of a foolish lad, who, for some reason, sets light value on the life God gave him, so risked it thus foolhardily."

If she expected a reply she did not get one. Mr. Geraldyn merely bowed his head politely to show he listened.

She went on:

"I've known Gordon from his boyhood almost, and he's not wanting for sense, so I see he must have a high opinion of you, or he'd not trust that young wife of his with you, as if you were as much her brother as that wild boy that's hanging his head down now, more like an ape than a Christian. Some people might think trusting a pretty girl to Geraldyn rather akin to giving the cat the cream to keep, but I lay my life Gordon knows what he's about."

Having had some experience of good Madame Saville's plain-spoken lectures to the officers, I moved off before she finished her speech, for when she mounted two pairs of spectacles at once on her nose as she was then doing, it meant business, and Arthur, also well aware of this, followed me saying, "Cecil is in for it. Mammy has got on her favourite hobby, and is lecturing him on the ills of idleness, combined in his case with dancing, dicing, drinking, in Dublin."

"And the delights of devotion to duty," said I laughing, for we all made a joke of Mrs. Saville, though no one could help liking her. "What do you think of Mr. Geraldyn's exchange? Were you consulted?"

"No, he kept it close; possibly thought

I might blame him for throwing up his appointment, as probably his people will."

"Do you think it unwise?"

"No, the extra expense more than swallowed the extra pay; he had less chance of service, and by his own account led a very aimless, idle life."

"Could he not return to his own regiment?"

"Of course he could; but they are, I know, a wild extravagant lot, and many of them rich, which is bad for a poor man like Cis—tempts him to get in debt."

"And in your heart you don't believe he can get on without you," I said. "You laughed at my anxiety for Kathie, and you are ten times worse over him."

"I won't deny it, little one. I believe it would take little to send Cecil to utter ruin of body and soul just now. A disappointment like his leaves a desperate heartache, and nothing drives a man to perdition quicker."

"He shows no sign of caring much now," I said; "but then he hid the other sort of pain, though he must have felt it."

"You are the only person to whom he has ever said a word, sweetheart, and he thinks so much of your kindness that you may do a great deal for him."

"I am very willing, even at the risk of Mrs. Saville's lectures," I returned.

"You may explain to her, Bride, mammy's true as steel; she never betrays a confidence. If Cecil likes to have the run of our *ménage*, as Larry will, let him come."

"And if it is the mud cabin that Mrs. Saville believes we shall be reduced to, they can sit on the hearth with the pig," I replied laughing. "Oh, how pretty the coast looks now."

"Aye, the Wicklow mountains. We shall be at our journey's end to-night, I hope."

CHAPTER VI.

"Beat of drum and bugle call,
Picket guard and gay parade,
Jolly mess and dazzling ball,
Soldiering's a glorious trade."

We were settled down in Dublin at last; after all the rumours of disaffection had died away, and we merely replaced an outgoing regiment.

Arthur and I had comfortable rooms very near the barracks, and were happy in this our first real taste of home-life alone together.

Two or three of the other officers' wives came over, but I made no great friendship with either of them, though good Mrs. Saville was a constant visitor, and, for all her oddity, I grew most sincerely attached to her; she was so kind, and frank, and sensible, that I was grateful for the fortune of having so wise a friend to turn to sometimes.

Mr. Geraldyn had effected his exchange and joined the regiment. Of course, having been some time aide-de-camp at the castle, Mr. Geraldyn had a large circle of acquaintance, but he entered into society just enough to prevent any remark, and spent so much of his time at our house that I became quite accustomed to his presence, and took no more

heed of his coming and going than of Larry's, except that the latter was usually in wild spirits and overflowing with fun and noise, while Mr. Geraldyn, besides being naturally quiet in manner, was more silent than when I knew him first, and seemed not only content, but thankful, to be left unnoticed if Arthur chanced to be out and I was occupied. I thought sometimes he still felt the effects of his accident; but he would not confess to anything but an occasional headache.

"What was Methuen thinking of when he sent Geraldyn to us with such a character?" asked our worthy senior major of Arthur one day as he sat in our room chatting.

"What was it? I do not know," asked Arthur.

"Why, that he was a charming fellow personally, but incorrigibly lazy; always within an ace of being in hot water for shirking duty, and idling about with the ladies at other times; hardly ever riding if he could drive even."

"He has changed his ways, then," observed Arthur. "I find him an excellent sub—quite an example for Larry."

"Hang him! I wish he'd get into a scrape," retorted Larry laughing. "If he wasn't so jolly good-natured, at least. I say, major, he don't shirk exercise with that filly he's breaking for you; I've been out with him to-day, it's a regular divil."

"Ah, just what I wanted to know," said the major. "Geraldyn offered to break it when I was going to sell it in disgust, and he never will speak about its temper."

"Well, you see, the brute has been left too long unbroken, and Cis swears she has only been badly handled, and will come round and be first-rate, and, if she does not break his neck, he'll break her in time, for he's got Job's patience, and sticks on like a leech."

"I shall sell her, I think."

"If you do Geraldyn will only buy her, and then, after she's killed him, he'll be out of pocket as well," replied Larry. "Sure you're always laughing at a man, Arthur, however clear he is in his statements."

"Never mind, Larry; let's hear what she did to-day."

"Oh, went fairly for a bit, except she bucked and kicked, and reared every little while."

"Pleasing description, major; sounds promising," I said.

"Yes, doesn't it?" said Major Hardy laughing. He was a good-tempered, middle-aged man, whose waistcoat curved out comfortably, and altogether he did not look likely to enjoy a fiery steed.

"Well, go on, Kavanagh."

"After a bit Geraldyn got tired of her going so quietly, I'm thinking, for he proposed we would ride back across country,

and I had his little bay and was to give a lead, sweet bad luck to me. After three or four jumps, as nate as a kitten, Sylvio shirked a wall. I took him over second turn, but that upset Zantippe, and she got in a fury."

"Is that the mare's name?" I asked.

"Aye, Cecil christened her so. Sure I don't know why."

"Because the lady in question was not famed for amiability," remarked Major Hardy.

"Was she a Turk or a haythen, sir, or what?" asked Larry.

"Something of the kind, my dear fellow; don't over-exert your brains, but tell us what happened."

"Faith, I never saw such a fight in my life. I thought she'd murder him; but he did stick on her splendidly, and put her at the wall time after time. He got a fall at last. I believe he hadn't strength left to keep on."

"Was he hurt?" I inquired.

"Oh, not at all. He came off quite light, and the filly was so dead beat she stood still, and I got hold of her rein; she tried to bite then."

"I'll sell the brute to-morrow."

"Ah, whisht now, hold your hand, sir; it's my belief she has the makings of a real jewel in her. After Cecil got his wind again he rode her over the wall, and she went sweetly after."

"With the exception of bucking, kicking, &c.," said the major smiling. "Where is Geraldyn? You are sure he is not hurt?"

"Divil a bit, unless he's drowned by now, for nothing would serve but he must go out sailing in that cockle-shell of a boat of his. He asked me to go; but it's blowing half a gale, so I told him I didn't see the divarsion of providing provision for the fishes by drowning or otherwise."

Larry took himself off, and the major asked Arthur if, as he was Mr. Geraldyn's greatest friend, he could not advise him to be less foolhardy; and again declared his determination to part with the mare.

"Don't do it on that account, major," said Arthur. "Geraldyn would be more careful of your property than his own neck, and he is bent on conquering her at any price."

"I wish I had never seen the beast; but her beauty tempted me."

"Well, on the whole, sir, if a fellow has a craving for excitement, perhaps that's as good as other forms for him."

"Ah, Gordon, that's another light I never thought of it in; but he's such a soft-mannered, delicate-looking boy, one hardly credits him with anything but being effeminate."

"He never was that," replied Arthur; "but he has certainly changed his habits of late. No man in the regiment takes harder exercise now."

The major went home, as he was to take his wife out that night to a rout. She was far younger than himself, being his second, and one of Mrs. Saville's aversions being only for gaiety, and having no great amount of sense; in short, Mrs. Saville's description of "an over-dressed washed-out wax doll" was hardly exaggerated.

I had not expected any visitors that evening, as most of the young officers were also going to the rout, but Mr. Geraldyn presently appeared.

"I have brought you a letter from my mother, Mrs. Gordon; it was inclosed in mine," he said.

I thanked him and told him Arthur was only out for a short time, if he liked to wait.

"I am disturbing you, though," he said. "You have your letters also."

I saw his glance fell quickly on one from Kathleen which lay on the table franked by her lover, and guessed the signature of "Headland" scrawled in the corner was no pleasant sight for him, as he could fancy the smiles and perhaps kisses with which the writer had been repaid; but still he could not refrain from asking news of her, though it hurt him to hear it.

"Indeed, I have not much," I answered. "I have a letter, as you can see, but it is full of nothing but descriptions of her dresses and jewellery."

"Ah! the corbeille," he said with a smile. "That's what they used to call it in Paris; it's a very engrossing subject, I suppose."

"I am not a fair judge," I replied. "You know I was married in a homespun gown, and had to tear even that up for bandages."

"That is the marriage I would like," he said. "To feel a woman cared enough to give herself to me like that, not for the sake of wedding fineries and——"

He did not end his speech, but turned away abruptly, and sat down.

I opened Lady Geraldyn's letter, which was warm and affectionate, full of gratitude for the care taken of her son in his illness, and saying she could never express how thankful she was that Arthur was constantly with him.

Though Lady Geraldyn would probably have been much vexed at her son's making a match with Kathie, whose face was her fortune; yet she with her motherlike contrariness was sore at her resisting his charms, and the letter was a mixture of conflicting feelings which would have vexed him, so I only said his mother overrated our services, and I feared he had been guilty of exaggeration.

"That is impossible," he replied with sudden warmth. "I doubt if either of you realize what it is to me to know I may come here when I like and feel sure of a welcome. Sometimes I am so sick of myself and every one at barracks I would do anything to get away from it, and

forget myself, and without your kindness I do not know what I might be tempted into."

"You have plenty of other friends."

"Plenty of acquaintances," he answered drily, relapsing into his usual impassive gentle manner. "That is not quite the same thing."

"Here comes Larry," I said, as his merry laugh sounded on the stairs, and he raced up and burst in hastily.

"Bride, have you made me that cravat you promised? Sure I believe you forgot, now."

"Not at all, here it is, and some of my best Mechlin lace on it, so be grateful. Oh, that's not the way to handle it; let me tie it for you, boy."

Cravats were elaborate articles then, and required more practice and neater handling than my harum-scarum brother had patience for, so he allowed me to arrange the folds and secure it properly with a jewelled pin of my own, and then he sprang up exclaiming:

"Faith, you're a pattern sister. It's as good as carrying home about to have you."

"I would endorse that remark, if I might venture to do so," Mr. Geraldyn said.

Ah, why wouldn't you, then?" said Larry. "Oh, it isn't manners, I suppose, though I don't know why, for Arthur's as fond of you as he is of his own brother, which he hasn't got by the same token. Cis, you look white about the gills, do you feel that fall you got? And have you had any dinner?"

"Yes, to both questions."

"You're as sparing of words as if you spilt gold pieces every time, like the O'More's bride. Were you hurt really, now?"

"Oh, nothing of consequence; I feel the old strain a bit, that's all. I shall be ready for Zantippe to-morrow. Dinner? Yes, I got some bread and cheese at a little pot-house, for the wind drove me so far down the coast I knew that mess would be pretty well over before I was back."

"That was not much of a dinner. Will you not have something more?" I asked.

"May I never get a worse, Mrs. Gordon; I had plenty, thank you, and I was hungry enough after such a sail."

"Who went with you?"

"No one; the old fellow was not about, and Pat, junior, took your view of it."

"Small blame to the crathur, seeing he has only one life," said Larry.

"If you go out in such weather, Cecil, we'll just be eating you second-hand at mess some day by way of a cod fish."

"Won't I do my best to disagree with you all, then. The weather was fresh, that's the worst you could call it; the waves foamed like freshly-opened champagne. I like it best flat then. Hollo, Bride, a letter from Kathie. What news? When's the wedding?"

"Read it for yourself, Larry boy. Mr. Geraldyn, I think you really are not wise to

do quite so much in a day, you will lay yourself up again."

"Oh, I am very strong," he said; "and if I don't tire myself out I can't sleep with the racket Larry, Adolphus, and Co. keep up till all hours."

"Whatever you do, Bride, don't persuade him to do anything to prevent his slumbers, or I'll lose my natural rest, for his room's next mine, and when he can't sleep he walks about."

"What's that, Larry?" said Arthur, who had just come in. "Your rest! why, a squadron of cavalry might exercise round your bed and not disturb you."

"I'm a very light sleeper, sir."

"You are! Don't I remember Walter and I trying to make you go duck-shooting and no shaking would do. Walter shot a great jug full of ice-cold water over you. I give you my word, Cis, the shock would have sent most men a yard off the bed. All Larry does is to yawn half a dozen times, and say, 'Is that you fellows? I fancied I was out in the rain.'"

"Oh, it's a fine thing to have a good conscience," said Larry.

"You mean digestion," replied Arthur. "Are you bound to the O'Flanagan Jones' rout, too, Cis?"

"I suppose so. I wish you were also, Mrs. Gordon."

"I do not know her, except by sight."

"One can hardly fail to do that. I suppose she will wear a yellow satin with a bird of paradise in her turban to-night, and scarlet ribbons."

"Sure she's been a fine woman," said Larry, "and she's telling every one you're going to teach her the figures of the polka to-night, Cecil."

"Heaven forbid! I'm not up to her weight."

"Why, Mrs. Hardy's just told me the same thing," said Arthur laughing. "You're a gay deceiver, Cis. I have been round there, and she whispered, with many warning glances at 'her tyrant,' that that sweet fellow, Geraldyn, was dying to teach her, if only the major did not interfere."

"Hang the woman! I never said such a thing," exclaimed Mr. Geraldyn indignantly. "You're inventing every word, Gordon."

"Am I? Wait till you fall a victim; but don't! pray don't! oh, please don't do anything to arouse the major, he is such a tyrant."

Arthur mimicked the lady's affected style of talking, Larry chuckled, but Mr. Geraldyn said shortly:

"I'll teach her one figure, anyhow."

"Which, Cis? Don't be savage, man. I don't want to spoil sport."

"Oh, confound you, Arthur; be done; the figure where the gentleman gives the lady the slip."

The polka but just introduced included many elaborate figures, graceful enough when danced quietly, but liable to degenerate into the wildest romp among less refined folk, as among other things the partners had to chase each other across the room, keeping time to the music, and scope was afforded to the lady for the prettiest coquetry, and I remembered, as probably Mr. Geraldyn did, that I had last seen him dance this particular figure with Kathie, and their performance had been specially applauded—she was so charming and *piquante*, and he so easy and graceful—and Mrs. O'Flanagan Jones' unwieldy bounds and Mrs. Hardy's affectation were hardly calculated to be attractive with that memory fresh in his mind.

CHAPTER VII.

"Death will give back what neither time nor might
Nor passionate prayer, nor longing hope restore;
Dear as to long blind eyes recovered sight,
He will give back those who are gone before."

A TREMENDOUS rattle as of hail against the window startled us.

"Oh, it's only the boys and their pea-shooters," said Larry calmly. "Geraldyn, you are coming with us, are you not?"

"Not if those fools' tricks are going on all down Sackville Street," replied Mr. Geraldyn, who had not quite recovered his equanimity.

"Oh, not at all; they will reserve the ammunition for coming back."

"Sounds like it," said Arthur, as another shower came on the glass. "Stop that, Adolphus, or I'll put you under arrest," he continued, leaning out laughing.

"Who is Adolphus?" I asked, for nicknames altered so frequently one could hardly tell who was meant.

"Hunt; it's his real name, but we call him Jack for shortness," said Larry. "Good-night, Bride. Geraldyn, are you coming or not?"

"I may as well, I suppose," he said

wearily, and wishing me good-night, followed Larry down, and we heard the car go off at a rattling pace to the tune of some rollicking chorus.

"Cecil wouldn't stand roasting to-night, so I spared him a few more of Mrs. Hardy's sentiments. She vows he is quite too attentive to her, and she is living on a volcano," remarked Arthur laughing.

"The major doesn't look explosive in any sense," I said.

"Poor old boy! as easy-going fellow as breathes, that is the cream of the joke. His wife tries to make believe he is consumed by jealousy, and she dare hardly speak to a man; whereas Hardy is only too grateful if any of us put her in a good temper with a little soft sawder."

"Why does she specially affect Mr. Geraldyn?"

"Because he is as little civil to her as his natural politeness permits; he can't bear her. Also he will have a title some day, and she loves a lord. Besides, he is known, my dear, to have the highest regard for you, and she is a born mischief-maker."

"She must be, if she wishes to make anything out of my relations to Mr. Geraldyn," I said indignantly.

"She got a considerable snub from the junior major the other day on the subject. I was one side a screen, they the other, and

heard it all. She had insinuated she hoped no one would think it odd that Mr. Geraldyn was so much here; for as she was, she might say, his greatest *confidante*, she knew all about it."

"What did Major Sutherland say?"

"He rounded on her with a tremendous oath, and said Geraldyn would be a pitiful cur if he did not show common gratitude to a lady who nursed him in his greatest need, and on a night, too, when the storm sent strong men creeping to their berths, to escape being knocked about; and he went on: 'I am no believer in women, they have taught me to be otherwise; but if there were more like Mrs. Gordon, I and others might be better fellows than we are.'"

"I am very much obliged to Major Sutherland; I know him so little."

"He does not affect society very much, and he lives rather hard; but he respects women who respect themselves. As for Mrs. Hardy, one tolerates the little idiot for the poor old major's sake. Bride, I forgot to tell you Major Tracy is in Dublin, and coming to see you to-morrow."

Major Tracy was much altered since he rode away from Ballydorough, leaving his love lying dead. His hair had grown grey; his keen, brown face was deeply lined, and the erect figure bowed as with age, but he talked of poor Lizzie almost cheerfully, and

said he could be thankful she was spared the knowledge of the fate of her family; her father dead in prison; one brother with Sam O'Connor's outlaws; one tortured to death on Vinegar Hill by the rebels on account of suspected treachery to their cause; Dixon and Loo had escaped and disappeared; Fannie, deserted by her rebel husband, had gone to live with some other man. Altogether a sad tale; one brother had been killed early in the outbreak, and the younger children were with relatives.

Perhaps, after all, Lizzie's death had been the happiest thing for her, for such troubles would have wrung her heart, dearly as she loved her family, and she would always have felt in marrying her some disgrace would have been reflected on Major Tracy.

He seemed very glad to meet us again, and during his short stay in Dublin visited us daily, sitting hour after hour recalling all the incidents of our acquaintance, as if he cared for little but what was connected with Lizzie.

"You wonder at me, Mrs. Gordon," he said at last, smiling. "But I can speak of her now, because I am confident I shall not long be separated from her."

"But you are not ill?" I exclaimed.

"Never man stronger. You will fancy me a dreaming fool, Mrs. Gordon, but in my own mind I am sure my time is short, and I am glad I have so few ties."

He changed the subject, but his earnestness impressed me, and Arthur did not laugh at the fancy as I half expected, but said when I told him:

"Those presentiments come true sometimes. I remember a young rattle-brain of Larry's stamp telling us before an action he felt he should be one of the first to fall, and he was too."

When Major Tracy came next day he brought a letter from his brother in America, giving a good account of Tom Corish.

"I expect he is married by now," he remarked. "My sister-in-law must have been out for some weeks, and Norah and Tom were to marry at once."

"Poor Norah! I hope she will be as happy as she deserves."

"I hope so too; between Gordon's liberality and your uncle's they can buy a nice farm, when Tom has enough experience to manage it, and my brother will look after them."

"Yes," said Arthur laughing. "Just hold your tongue about me, Tracy. It's a fine thing for me to be conniving at the escape of a rebel, and a deserter into the bargain."

"Public example should overrule private gratitude—eh, Gordon? Very good theory, but you are not quite the stuff to be a Roman parent, I fancy. Mrs. Gordon, I have been going to ask you why Geraldyn did not marry your sister?"

"Because she would not marry him. How did you know he liked her, Major Tracy?"

"It needed no great perception to see he had lost his heart to her at first sight, as indeed half the men in camp did, what between her beauty and her wonderful courage," said Major Tracy. Then after a pause he went on, "After my trouble Geraldyn's kindness to me was unspeakable. I can remember nothing else of that time hardly but that boy's goodness. No woman could have shown more sympathy, and he had such wonderful tact, too, that he always seemed to do and say just the right thing. I daresay all the other fellows meant well, but they worried me beyond bearing, and then I was so ungracious they were disgusted with me, and no wonder; but Geraldyn stood by me through it all. Ah, Miss Kavanagh threw away a good fellow's heart, I thought she fancied him too."

"She was a mere child and did not know her own mind," said Arthur. "Lord Headland is a good, steady man, and I suppose she prefers him."

"Well, I am sorry for Geraldyn's disappointment," replied the major.

"So am I, but he'll live over it, I suppose, as most men do."

"It will go harder with him than many; he is a peculiarly sensitive temperament," said Major Tracy rising to take his leave.

"This is my real good-bye, Mrs. Gordon. I return to my regiment to-morrow."

It was his last farewell. Not many weeks after he was shot through the heart while gallantly heading his men in the north, in a skirmish with the rebels.

We found afterwards that he had been so confident that he had not long to live, that he had made his will during that visit to Dublin, and had left to me some jewels he had bought for poor Lizzie, and to Mr. Geraldyn all his personal property, and a considerable sum of money, which he had inherited from a godfather; all the rest of his property, which was a substantial amount, went to his brother, who was his only near relative, and quite satisfied with the arrangement. He did not return to live in England, but remained on his American property, and Tom Corish and his wife settled down there also, and Tom becoming a steady, shrewd, hard-working fellow, they got on excellently, and from time to time sent such prosperous accounts to the old country that others followed them out to America.

CHAPTER VIII.

"I sing of good fellows,
And this is their sign:
They rail not at laughter,
Love, duels, or wine."

Dublin society suited the younger officers perfectly. Larry and his friends were in their glory in its racket; the wild young students at the college, who were some of the best blood in Ireland, were perpetually indulging in some mad freak or another, and Master Larry was usually at the forefront, though he had a marvellous aptitude for keeping out of real scrapes, and, whether by luck or mother-wit, scarcely ever brought himself under the displeasure of the senior officers, though Arthur occasionally bestowed a private lecture on him, as when, for instance, on a gala night at the theatre, the leading tragedian proceeded as usual to snuff the tallow candles which illuminated the stage, and was knocked backwards by the explosion of gunpowder with which the snuffers had been filled, which put a sudden end to the play, as the unfortunate man was blackened like a negro.

On another occasion, all the principal streets were left in darkness, by a simultaneous ex-

tinction of the lamps, an arrangement of fuses, ingenious enough to make one regret such talent had been expended on so indifferent an object, had been contrived with sufficient skill to allow the conspirators to escape before the alarm was given. There really seemed no end to their devices and absurd exploits, and yet there was no real harm in their mischief; even if sometimes the perpetrators were carried away by their wild spirits, generally some lucky chance stopped them short in time.

Mr. Geraldyn did not take part in these exploits, but yet he was very popular among the young ones, for he had too much tact to oppose their mad frolics directly, and sometimes used his influence to good purpose, and protected an unlucky junior who had joined at Dublin and was one of the butts of the regiment; and practical joking might have been carried to a worse extent than it was but for Cecil Geraldyn, who took "the Blossom's" part when fun degenerated into persecution. "The Blossom," thus called because his Christian name was a singular one, namely, "Narcissus," was a weak, ugly, awkward youth, with remarkably red hair, in whom it was very difficult to take the smallest interest, and I believe he was very unconscious of the amount of teasing his protector saved him from. Possibly he thought his tormentors could not do much more than they already made him undergo, for he was seldom allowed

a night in peace. His bed was the resting-place of every live animal that could be stuffed into it; his furniture was piled on it at least half the nights in the week, and "booby traps," in the shape of jugs of water, were balanced over his door, or tubs put for him to walk into, and he seemed never to profit by his experience of these matters, but invariably fell into the trap. These forms of teasing were, however, considered by all the other officers as quite fair play, not to be interfered with, they having all, in turn, gone through them; but there were, as usual, some not so well disposed among the juniors, and on one occasion "the Blossom" would have had to drink an enormous tumbler of raw whiskey but for Mr. Geraldyn's arrival on the scene, and on another night he might have been actually stifled, as his door was fastened and a great pan of burning charcoal left in his room by the half-tipsy young men who wished "to smoke him out."

This was carrying matters too far, and I was glad Larry was not mixed up in either performance.

Duels were common events, and there was a dark side to all this rollicking gaiety, for many men were unscrupulous libertines, and cared little at what cost they succeeded in gratifying their love of intrigue and excitement, and many duels were fought on trifling pretexts when in reality some lady, whose

name was kept secret, was the real cause of the affair.

I rarely heard anything of these events till they were over, though several of our officers went out, and I dreaded what Larry might be led into.

Arthur, however, laughed at my fears, told me he must have his fling like the rest, and added kindly that mother had trained her boys too well for him to go really wrong. Nevertheless, I guessed he kept a watch on Larry, and was a wise and kind brother to him. I was visited one afternoon by the junior major, a man who did not, as a rule, affect quiet households, but was by some thought no good friend for women, though I liked him well enough since he took my part with Mrs. Hardy.

He was a fine man, too, and reminded me of a great hawk Walter once had, having a hooked nose and fierce grey eyes. His mission surprised me not a little; he came to ask me to take charge of a girl who, having been taken by a fine madam as a kind of companion, had been turned out homeless and penniless at a moment's notice, because her pretty face had attracted one of her lady's beaux, and the man, who was a heartless scoundrel, meant to deceive her by a false marriage, having a wife from whom he lived apart. Arthur did not over and above fancy it at first, for he doubted the girl being so innocent

and simple as the major thought, and liked me not to be mixed up in such matters; but he agreed at last, and when the poor young thing came she was indeed the most childlike country maid, a blue-eyed, flaxen-haired, frightened creature, who had been tempted from her English village by the prospect of her fine situation, and craved for nothing but to go home to her mother, and but for the kindness of Major Sutherland she must have been lost, poor child, for she had no idea of how to take care of herself, and indeed, penniless as she was, could hardly have got home.

I kept her till a packet sailed, and took care not even Larry saw her, hoping that her admirer would never know how she escaped him; but one night Arthur came in looking very grave, and said:

"Sutherland and Wyndham have had a dispute at cards, and it ended with a challenge. I am Sutherland's second; the other will be here presently."

My first thought was of fear on Arthur's account; but he smiled, and told me the seconds would not do anything.

"I hear Wyndham is a dead shot, and he means mischief. I never saw a man look so like a devil. Directly he began to be insulting Sutherland struck him with his glove in the face, saying, 'I see what you want; take it!' But it was clear Wyndham came prepared to pick a quarrel."

The custom of the time was so entirely in favour of such affairs of honour that I knew it was inevitable; but I passed a miserable time of fear in spite of Arthur's assurance that he was in no more danger than at a parade. And I was very thankful to hear his step on the stair once more. I ran to meet him, eagerly exclaiming:

"Oh! are you quite safe?"

"Quite, you silly child," he said gaily, "and so is Sutherland, which is far more to the purpose. So now will you give us some breakfast?"

"I am so very glad you are not hurt, Major Sutherland," I said. "I have been so anxious for you too."

He pressed my hand warmly, saying with a smile:

"You have a kind heart, Mrs. Gordon. There are not many would trouble about a graceless fellow like myself. I really believe you'll be sorry if I tell you Wyndham is dead."

"Is he really?" I said with a shudder of horror, which I could not hide.

"No, he is not," the major said quietly. "You need not shrink away from me. His beauty is spoilt, though. You will not regret that?"

"The scoundrel! He tried to fire before the moment," exclaimed Arthur hotly.

"I had been forewarned of his fashion,"

said the major, "so was prepared. I am afraid I spoilt those handsome teeth of his; he must buy a new set."

"Is he much hurt?" I asked, and was informed his jaw was broken, but nothing dangerous need be apprehended, and I was glad to turn the conversation to the major's *protégée*, of whose safe arrival he had heard.

Presently in marched Larry, with Mr. Geraldyn, who looked more animated than usual, and Larry was positively beaming with mischief and fun to an extent that attracted the major.

"I should say you've been robbing an orchard successfully, Kavanagh, by your face."

"Ah, not at all, sir; it's only shining, like your own, with the freshness of the top of the morning. I've been out in the Phœnix Park," replied Larry demurely, with a knowing stress on the last two words.

"In some confounded mischief, as usual, probably."

"Sure, sir, I was just obeying orders, that was all."

"What orders?" demanded the major sharply.

"Well, sir, the colonel, and yourself, and Major Hardy are always impressing on me I can't have a better example than my worthy brother-in-law there, so I've just been walkin

in his steps," said Larry in a meek voice, but hardly able to keep in his laughter.

"You have some sense in you, Geraldyn; what has been going on?"

"Only a trifling affair of honour, major," replied Mr. Geraldyn smiling. "Larry has made his *début*."

"Oh, Larry, you have not been fighting, surely?" I exclaimed reproachfully.

"No, Bride; I have only been acting as second, and that is a little service other people feel bound to render their friends occasionally," said Larry, with a mischievous glance at Arthur, who laughed and said:

"You're dying to tell your story, Larry; out with it, lad. Who were the combatants?"

"The Blossom and Councillor Bodkin."

The two older men exchanged glances and then laughed heartily.

"What on earth caused those two to be blazing at each other?"

"Ah, well, 'twas sweet bad luck to the poor Blossom," said Larry. "But the councillor has a pretty maid, and the other night the Blossom had shipped more punch than he could carry discreetly, so what does he do but mistakes the mistress for the maid, and gives her a kiss. She screamed like a legion of pigs in a high wind, and in bounced old Bodkin and kicked the Blossom; and so what else could he do? But kissing that old woman

ought to have been satisfaction enough, for she's got a foiner beard than her husband any day."

"And what were you doing in it, Geraldyn?" asked Major Sutherland. "You were not the councillor's second, I suppose?"

"No, sir, not exactly. The fact was, Larry and the Blossom being totally ignorant of anything but the theory of duelling, were afraid of committing themselves, and had to come to me for advice and weapons."

"I hope no one is hurt?" I said, for I could not think of it as lightly as the men did.

"Not the least," answered Mr. Geraldyn smiling; "I never saw such a scene in my life. At the first fire down dropped both men. The doctor ran to the Blossom first. He began gasping out messages for his relatives, and begged me to kiss his mother for him."

"One would have thought he'd had kissing enough," said Arthur. "A treat for you, Cis, if she's like him. Well, go on; wasn't he hurt?"

"Divil a bit," cried Larry. "The wind of the ball passed close to his face, and it scared him. He'd just have had to fight again, only old Bodkin was on his back, groaning too. We had Surgeon Pack. You know he's blind as a beetle. Well, his glasses fell off, and I trod on them; so he cursed like a maniac, and could not see an inch. We ripped up old Bodkin's clothes, and, sure enough, there

was a round black mark on his fat carcase——"

And here Larry could say no more for laughing, and Mr. Geraldyn went on:

"Pack declared he was bleeding to death internally; we all stood round, feeling rather queer, and the Blossom cried like a baby, and begged his pardon. Old Bodkin turned up his eyes and grew livid, and I swear I believe he would have died, but just then Pack, who was kneeling by him, picked up something off the grass and shouted, "Begorra, gintlemen, here's the bullet. Why, councillor, you're sound as a roach, man!'"

"God and the saints bless you for that same, doctor," cried Bodkin. "God save the King and the man that made the gingerbread!" and he jumped up.

"Had he gone mad?"

"Not a taste of it," replied Larry; "but he was all of a cold shake coming to the Park, though, he'd drunk as much whiskey as his second thought prudent, so he bought some ginger nuts to warm him, and got a shilling changed in halfpence, and the bullet just rattled in his breeches pocket among the nuts and coppers, and printed off a halfpenny on his fat sides."

"Well, neither of these men of valour had heart for another shot," remarked Mr. Geraldyn laughing; "they both declared themselves amply satisfied, and I offered to try a shot

with Bodkin's second if he had any doubts, but he declined politely, so we considered the matter settled; but I have not had such an amusing morning's sport for many a long day."

And as nobody was the worse for the matter, even I could not help laughing at the absurdity of it all.

CHAPTER IX.

"Take your places, gentles, 'tis a fine
Show, and a goodly."

The Dublin Corporation was, by its charter, compelled to perambulate the limits of the lord mayor's jurisdiction once in three years, and it was said to be as grand a procession as even those of the Roman Carnival, so I was glad to have a chance of seeing it. In spite of the rumours of disaffection which from time to time arose, no expense was spared by the twenty-five guilds of Dublin; each corporation had an enormous carriage with a great platform and canopy, all bedecked with ribbons, gilding, and flags, and drawn by eight or ten horses, and on each platform were the workshops of each trade, and men plying their handiworks. The weavers wove ribbons or bits of cloth, the printers printed little songs, and the bakers made little cakes, and all these things were scrambled for by the noisy, merry crowd.

Nothing was gayer than the smiths; their forge was in full swing, and they were attended by a gaudy phaeton in which sat a handsome woman, who, dressed as Venus,

was attended by little naked cupids, with goose wings and bows. A huge fellow represented Vulcan, armed with a monstrous sledge hammer ; his rival Mars was more favoured by Venus. Crowds of other gods and goddesses, satyrs, nymphs, and devils followed. But the tailors were perhaps yet more diverting ; they mustered two hundred and fifty strong, all well mounted on horses borrowed of their customers, and often far more spirited than was by any means gratifying to the riders.

Mr. Geraldyn was just suggesting that to lend the amiable Zantippe would have been a good way to settle accounts with his tailor, when Larry, leaning out perilously far over the balcony, exclaimed:

"Why, it's father and Walter too;" and, swinging himself over the balcony, dropped lightly into the crowd.

"What wild-goose chase is he after now?" said Arthur. "Ah, he is right, though, there is Mr. Kavanagh as I am alive."

I could hardly believe my eyes, but father and Walter had long wanted to come to Dublin on business, and had found a good opportunity to take passage up from Wexford in a little brig, so arrived in time to see the show, which lasted many hours, ending in a curious ceremony, the mayor hurling a javelin as far as he could into the sea to intimate that was the boundary between himself and Neptune. I was overjoyed to find that

father could remain some few days with us; Walter had good news for us in the birth of a little son, now a fortnight old, and he laughingly declared mother was so proud of her grandchild that she had sent him off to have it to herself.

There were, of course, innumerable questions asked about Kathie and her future husband.

"I cannot realize it at all," said father, half smiling, but with a sigh. "It seems impossible that bit of mischief will be a peeress."

"A good name for her," responded Arthur laughing. "It's a wonder I'm not prematurely grey, sir, with the care of her."

"She was always a handful," remarked Walter.

"Much you know of her powers," said Arthur. "Her opportunities were limited at Ballydorough, but when she became the toast of all London——," he stopped with an expressive shrug, as if words could not convey enough.

"That is the most incredible thing of all," replied father. "Kathie was a pretty child; but among all the beauties of the town, I could hardly dream she would be noticed, much less singled out so specially."

"Kathleen blossomed out with uncommon rapidity," Arthur remarked. "She was a lady of fashion, equal to holding her own with

royalty, before she had been three days in London."

"She liked to aim high," said Walter. "Not two days before you left I saw her coming in with an apron full of eggs, and, to gather a rose almost out of reach, she gave a spring, forgot the eggs, and letting go her apron, caught the rose and let all the eggs smash."

"Emblematic!" said Arthur drily. "Headland's not exactly a rosebud, but in catching him she made a considerable destruction, only it was hearts not eggs she damaged. Willow was at a premium when the affair was announced."

"I wonder she did not choose Mr. Geraldyn," said Walter, who had a liking for him, having seen a good deal of him in the last few days.

"I wish she had," remarked father.

Arthur looked surprised.

"You are not ambitious, sir? Headland is the best match in London, and a steady man besides. Cis is poor for the son of a viscount, and has his way to make. As matters are Kathie will probably be a duchess."

"And I ought to be overjoyed, you think?" answered father smiling. "I know, Gordon, it is a wonderful chance that, thanks to your mother's introduction, Kathie should be raised to such a position, but all the same I am weak enough to regret losing my child."

"Losing her, father?" I cried, puzzled by his words.

"Yes, Bride; I am not so unversed in the world as to suppose that from what I hear of Lord Headland he will be content to spend much time in our home; it will be too plain for his liking; nor can your mother and I go back to London, though we once knew it well, so Kathie will by degrees be almost lost to us."

"Why should he not like Ballydorough as well as Arthur does?"

Father smiled as he said:

"What is your opinion, Gordon?"

"That the day I first saw Ballydorough was the luckiest of my life. But I cannot answer for Headland; he is good, steady, upright, but a stickler for ceremonies and etiquette, a very much more formal man than his father the duke."

"Just what I gathered from Bride's description, and it is best Kathleen's family should force no claims on his attention; he will like it better so, and you will see her, Bride." Father spoke steadily, but his voice broke a little at last, for Kathie had been his darling and companion ever at his side, and it was hard to give her up; but he added smiling:

"Had her choice fallen on Geraldyn he would have rivalled you in the mother's regard, Arthur."

"Oh, that would not do at all, sir; on

those grounds I am glad Cis was rejected; but it has gone hard with him."

"Where is he?" I asked; "he has not been here lately."

"He has a second horse to break, and even Sutherland, who is not wont to be tender over the young ones, told me that he was verging on suicide, and I ought to look after him."

"Is it a second Zantippe? That is a dangerous brute," said Walter, who was an authority on the subject, having broken many a colt at home.

"No, I fancy not; but Cecil is never out of the saddle in the day, and his only idea of rest is to sail a little slight boat in the teeth of a gale half the night. Then he gets in, too tired even to undress, lies down an hour in wet things, and looks more dead than alive on parade."

"Poor boy!" said father. "Can you do nothing to check him, Gordon?"

Arthur shook his head.

"Sir, you must know by this time when a woman has sent a fellow completely off his balance, it's a queer job to meddle with, and Geraldyn had better half kill himself by sheer hard exercise than seek forgetfulness in drink or other things; his brother tried that plan, and I would rather Cis broke his neck over a fence than ended like Douglas."

"When Kathie is married he will be better," I said.

"Just what I remarked to Sutherland, who replied he supposed that was the right view for a married man to take, but he begged to differ; however, I will ask Cis to dine, and you may lecture him, Bride, if you like, and think it any good."

"Probably matters will mend themselves," remarked father. "The lad will make himself ill. He does not look strong."

"Oh, that is only his being so fair. He is tough enough," said Arthur carelessly.

Mr. Geraldyn did not look "tough" when he came in the evening; his face was colourless but for a feverish flush, and altogether he had changed so much that, as the others had not joined us, I took on myself to scold him, as he had been my patient and I felt justified, but he stopped me saying:

"Don't, Mrs. Gordon. I know I am a fool, and you are very good to care, but a man must do something, and to be quiet drives me mad. I should do worse if I gave this up; it does not hurt me, really."

He was in such earnest, and there was so strange a light in his eyes, that I felt it was best to leave him to himself, as Arthur did, trusting in time to right him, so I only told him jestingly I should enforce his resting while he was with me, and talked to him of indifferent things till gradually he was forced to interest himself, and his face lost its strange expression, and he looked more like himself

once more, and joined eagerly in Arthur's inquiries about the state of Wexford since the outbreak.

"There is a terrible list of those who have suffered," said father. "I doubt if even yet the names of the sufferers, and their losses in property, are half ascertained; every town has something to record besides Wexford, which was of course the very hotbed."

"Many fearful atrocities were perpetrated at Vinegar Hill on prisoners," remarked Walter.

"Aye, I saw a sight there to last one all one's days," said Mr. Geraldyn. "Some poor wretch who had undergone slow torture, blinded, disfigured, a mass of ulcerated wounds, yet living; no wonder the sight stirred the soldiers to take vengeance on those brutes."

"Many clergy were ill-used, were they not, father?"

"Yes, many murdered, others robbed of all, and their houses burnt; one curious thing was that as the Murphys and other priests of the same stamp were plotting atrocities, they were attacked and routed by a swarm of bees."

"Poor Harvey seemed to have done his best to make peace, or at least prevent cruelty," said Walter.

"I wonder if it is all over?" I remarked.

"I doubt it, Mrs. Gordon," said Mr. Geraldyn coolly. "I hear there are ancient prophecies to the effect there will be a struggle for liberty under certain circumstances, and they have preceded each outbreak."

"Being, in fact, invented to fit," said Arthur.

"Of course; but the people swallow anything; also the priests are giving charms on pink ribbons to all Catholics."

"To distinguish them from Protestants," said father. "That is a bad sign now; do you know it, Mr. Geraldyn?"

"I am about the country a good deal, and hear odd scraps of information," he said carelessly. "But it may all blow over, and Mrs. Gordon looks quite pale, so let us talk of something livelier. Where is Larry, by-the-bye?"

"Just coming, I suspect, unless an earthquake has burst open the front door," remarked Arthur smiling, as a tremendous noise heralded Larry's approach. He entered, followed by Mr. Hunt.

"Where have you been all day, Larry?" I asked.

"Is it yourself doesn't know, Mrs. Gordon? Am I not the victim of heartless tyranny and fraternal oppression, ma'am? Father, are not you going to take the part of your injured offspring?"

"Not before I hear his case," said father laughing.

"Why, sir, I have been made an example of by that unnatural relative of mine, and had extra duty all day nearly."

"Probably with very good reason," replied father.

"Oh dear! oh dear! sure I thought you would take my side!" and Larry, dropping on the rug, proceeded to howl at the top of his voice in the most absurd imitation of a very young baby, interrupting himself to say, "It's very hard a poor little choild like myself is to be bullied by a nasty, big, ugly man like that, it is."

"Say that again, Larry," laughed Arthur, suddenly picking him up by the coat collar and holding him up in the air.

"By Jove, Gordon! I would not have thought you capable," said Mr. Hunt grinning.

"Wouldn't you, Jack?" replied Arthur, and catching him up also, he held up the two for a moment, one in each hand, with a little pride in his own splendid strength.

"That is more than you could have done, Arthur, when I saw you last," said father, as the two lads were restored to their feet.

"I should think it was, sir. I tried to carry little Mollie across the court-yard, and had to put her down ignominiously the day I left."

"For all your muscles, Arthur, I believe I

could throw you," remarked Mr. Geraldyn quietly.

"You, Cecil?" Arthur said, looking rather amazed. "It is ages since we tried a wrestle, but I have not grown weaker, and you had not a chance even then."

"Will you try again some day?"

"Now! now!" cried Larry and Mr. Hunt in one breath, Larry adding:

"It would be like iced claret in the dog days to see my tyrant overthrown, when even my unnatural parent does not offer to protect me."

"Because he is only too glad to know you are under so good a disciplinarian," said father smiling at Larry's absurdities.

"Oh, I'm an oppressed victim, as usual. Down with the giant, Cis!"

"I wonder what next you will expect, boys?" said Mr. Geraldyn reprovingly. "Do you suppose Mrs. Gordon's drawing-room is to be made a wrestling-ring?"

Father remarked smiling:

"Really, I must own to being curious to see the trial. Perhaps for once Mrs. Gordon might allow the use of her room, as I may have no other chance of witnessing the encounter."

Of course I assented, being rather desirous to see the struggle myself.

"Very well," Arthur said. "Off with your coat, Cis, and we will try."

"Is it wise for you, though, Mr. Geraldyn?" I said, suddenly remembering the short time since his accident.

"It's a matter of trick chiefly," he replied. "You don't suppose I am going to match strength with him, Mrs. Gordon? He could get me down with one hand."

They did not look fairly matched as they stood opposite each other. Arthur was some inches the taller, and his breadth of shoulders and chest showed even more remarkably now his coat was off. His opponent was slender, and his graceful figure gave more promise of activity than muscular power, but his perpetual hard exercise had braced his limbs like steel, and though we could hardly tell how it was accomplished, in a few moments after they grappled Arthur was down, and Mr. Geraldyn stood over him, flushed and panting for breath, but triumphant. The two boys were in ecstasies, and Arthur springing up, exclaimed:

"Bravo, Cecil, that's the cleverest throw I ever underwent. Where did you learn it?"

"At a fair in Cornwall, off the champion wrestler of the district. He was very drunk, or, I fancy, would not have been bribed to impart it."

"I'd give five pounds to know it," said Mr. Hunt, "I daresay you could throw me," which, as he was the smallest man in the regiment, produced a laugh at his expense.

"That is just what it cost me, Adolphus," replied Mr. Geraldyn, resuming his coat. "But as for throwing you, I don't know. Of course a little fellow like Gordon is one thing. I couldn't promise to overcome a Goliath of your stamp."

CHAPTER X.

"You have no cause to hold my friendship doubtful;
I never was and never will be false."

FATHER could not finish off his business quite so soon as he expected, and as Walter had excellent accounts of Eveleen and the boy, they were glad to stay a few days more in Dublin, as they did not often come up to town.

Walter was very popular with the regiment, and I was proud of walking with my handsome father and receiving compliments on his good looks.

Mrs. Saville and he became good friends, her outspoken frankness amused him, and she told him he was a sensible man, and she was glad one of her boys had the luck to fall in good hands just at pairing-time.

"We all go through it, you know, Mr. Kavanagh, as sure as teething, and I get quite in a fret when I see it coming on, for dear, dear, the fools the boys are when they take to it; they would fall down before a petticoat hung on a clothes line."

"You are no friend to early marriages, Mrs. Saville?"

"All depends! Now, Gordon, though I

say it to his wife's face, is just worth double, though he was always a good lad; but when a man chooses a flirting fool like young Rickman did, or a woman who can't think of anything but babies like Captain Smith's wife, or a spiteful dressy doll like the major's beauty, oh dear, dear, dear!"

"The major was old enough to know his mind," I remarked.

"No fool like an old fool, child. He'd almost better be like Sutherland, an open and unblushing black sheep with the women."

"I do not believe he is half so bad as people say," I replied warmly, for I fancied the major took more care to hide his good actions than most men did to conceal their vices.

"As sure as my name is Jemima Saville, Bride, he is no saint, and if you want to try your hand on making him one it will be a failure, and you'll burn your fingers," said the old lady emphatically.

"Oh, I am not thinking of it," I returned laughing. "But he is always kind to me."

"Well, well, he knows enough about the women to see what they're made of. Mr. Kavanagh, have you any more daughters for us?"

"I am afraid Mollie is over-young," laughed father, "and Kathleen is as good as married."

"A good thing too," said the old lady severely. "As the Mounseers say, it should not be permitted to be so handsome. Bride,

my dear, of course you know we are to have all the castle dignities at our dance."

The dance was to be given a few days later, and was to be preceded by a grand dinner, to which both father and Walter were invited.

It would also be on Kathleen's wedding day. I made no mention of the coincidence to Mr. Geraldyn, but his little sisters were to be among Kathie's bridesmaids, and Joan, who was devoted to him, wrote him a long, childishly-worded, but clever account of all the grandeur that they expected to see at the ceremony, little thinking that her words cut him to the quick, for she described how Lord Headland had publicly presented Kathie with splendid jewels, and then, by her request, fastened them round her throat and in her hair.

I hardly saw Mr. Geraldyn now except by chance. Arthur reported that he was riding harder than ever, and seldom at mess.

"I am afraid that Cecil is doing worse than over-exerting himself at last," Arthur remarked rather sadly one evening when we were alone.

"Why do you think so?"

"He is in sudden want of ready money, after telling me a week ago that he was fairly flush and had no debts. Look here, Bride."

Arthur threw me a little box. It contained a splendid diamond pin which I knew well that Mr. Geraldyn prized highly, it

having been given him when a child by the lovely, ill-fated Marie Antoinette, who had made a pet of him.

"I recognized it. He sold it to-day, and it was in Kelly's window. And to-night he wanted to sell me Sylvio."

"Sylvio? Why, I thought he was so attached to his horse; it eats out of his hand, and comes if he calls it."

"Yes; he must be very hard pressed to part with either horse or jewel, and I cannot but fear it is something he is ashamed to tell me, for he is open enough generally about his affairs."

"Are you going to buy Sylvio?"

"I told him I would consider, as it suits you so well. Hardy has asked for the refusal if I do not."

"For Mrs. Hardy? Oh, he will not like that; she wrung its shoulder so when he lent it to her."

"I could see it was terribly against the grain to assent, but he did, and would only give me till to-morrow to decide. Whatever his reason is, it is urgent; but he would not vouchsafe a hint even, and was silent and almost sulky, so I left him."

Arthur went on to say that he had purchased the diamond rather than let it go into strange hands, and should hold it in case Cecil ever cared to redeem it; but he feared that Mr. Geraldyn was giving way to the family passion

for gambling and other worse dissipation, for he had reason to know he was frequenting a disreputable quarter of the town, and went to a low gambling hell, which was often the scene of very disgraceful orgies.

"Sutherland has met him in queer places lately, and although the major's own ways are not immaculate, he does not care to see the young ones going down hill; and he can do a good act at times, as we know."

I assented, and we dropped the subject, but I felt very sorry. No one could see much of Mr. Geraldyn without liking him, and I could not help thinking he was one who could steer no middle course, but would rise or fall to one extreme or the other; and he had begun so well it seemed the sadder that he should give way now.

The next morning dawned fair and cloudless. It was my darling Kathleen's wedding day, and I could not but hope it might be a good omen for her future, and if father and the others laughed a little at my fancies, perhaps they did not quite disbelieve them.

Later in the day a parcel was brought me which had come from London by a special messenger; it contained a liberal supply of richly-iced wedding cake and the usual cards, favours, and gloves, only the latter, instead of being the ordinary ones supplied with no reference to size, were carefully selected to fit Arthur, Larry, and myself, and mine were

the daintiest that could be purchased, delicately embroidered with seed pearls and edged with valuable lace. A little note lay within them saying that when I received the parcel Kathleen would be the Marchioness of Headland; but that no change must ever come between her and myself, for she should never be anything but my own most loving sister Kathie.

Father was absent when the box was opened, but Larry had appeared, and having a very sweet tooth, was not long in tasting the wedding cake. Rather unfortunately, as I thought, at that moment Mr. Geraldyn appeared. As his eyes fell on the unmistakable tokens scattered on the table, the colour came to his face for a moment, and I saw him bite his lip as he used to do after his accident when he could hardly hide his physical pain; but he said courteously to me:

"Permit me to offer my congratulations, Mrs. Gordon. I see you already have received wedding cake and cards, so the ceremony is over."

Larry, whose heedlessness often stood him in good substitute for tact, and carried him over difficulties, broke in to my relief by inviting Mr. Geraldyn to try the cake, as if he thought the whole affair had no special interest for Cecil; the latter declined, saying pleasantly:

"I am not quite so fond of sweets as you are, Larry."

"Sure, I'm just making the most of all the good I'll get out of Kathie's wedding," said Larry with his mouth full. "I call it a downright fraud. Here's two of my sisters married and not so much as a chance to kiss their bridesmaids, or any divarsion at all."

"You would have had to embrace me, Larry, in Bride's case, for I suppose I represented the young ladies; but I should think you had your share of that occupation when I was married," said Walter.

"Enough to last him his life," remarked Arthur. "I'll swear he kissed everything that wore petticoats, from the bride to the old cook, and she had to remove her pipe to oblige him."

"That was a real jewel of a wedding," cried Larry. "I would not have thought you had eyes to spare for your neighbours, though, Arthur, for you were a powerful good hand at courting yourself just then. By the powers, I never thought you'd play such a mean trick as to get married on the quiet, without so much as saying, 'With your leave,' or 'By your leave' to your wife even. Outsiders would be led to suppose you had carried your wife off as the Romans did."

"The Sabines!" remarked Walter.

"Oh, be done with your Greek quotations, Walter," cried Larry, and heedless of the other's laughter he went on: "I would not have known you were married at all,

Arthur, only we met Bride and your miserable remains in the cart, and of course she would not have gone so far out of her way for any man but her own. I wonder what will be our first sight of the marchioness? I suppose they are having a foine divarsion just now."

"London weddings differ a little from Irish," said Mr. Geraldyn. "Except my small sisters I am afraid the bridesmaids would hardly have appreciated promiscuous embracing, Larry."

"Oh, I would never have dared offer to salute Headland's sisters; they have powerfully stiff backbones of their own, and so had the duchess; the duke is the best man of the lot. He used to make me tell him Irish stories, and laugh till he cried again. Maybe I didn't tell him about your first wake more than a dozen times, Arthur."

"Well, I will allow you got the best of me there," said Arthur.

"Did I never tell you, Cis? Arthur was mighty curious to see a wake, so I told him he should, and he stood the whiskey like a man as I bid him a few nights later, and we went to Widow Dooley's, and sure enough 'twas a beautiful wake, over her son, poor Patsey, and the women were keening and ullohoing just splendidly, and what with the smoke of the pipes and the peat 'twas hard to see across the cabin; but no doubt at all Patsey Dooley

was a lovely corpse, six feet he stood, and a cast in one eye, and we stayed half an hour, and Arthur was nearly in tears himself, I believe, for the mother was so cut up by her losing her only son, and cried a bucketful, till Arthur gave her a handful of silver, and we were just off when, bad luck to the corpse, but he got the hiccoughs."

"Got what?" exclaimed Mr. Geraldyn.

"Sure the whiskey was sent down a little too soon, and Patsey had got at it before he was laid out."

"Why, he wasn't dead at all?"

"Of course not, but there wasn't a real corpse handy, so he just died to oblige the strange gentleman."

"And they took me in thoroughly," Arthur said smiling. "Why, the old woman wept copiously, and faith I think with the aid of the whiskey, half believed her son was dead."

"Ah, not at all, but she had always been one of the best keeners in the barony, and she had to keep her reputation up before the quality, don't you see?"

"Well, I hope the corpse has enjoyed plenty more whiskey since," returned Arthur. "Bride, you are coming for a ride to-day, are you not? I will go and see about the horses."

"You cannot have the chestnut," remarked Larry; "I saw it with a side-saddle on at Mrs. Connell's door."

Arthur had sold his horses in London, and

was trying some with a view to purchase, so hired one for me from a job-master till he could find some to his mind.

"I had better go to Geoghegan for the grey mare, then, Bride; you liked her paces, did you not?"

"Ah, no!" exclaimed Mr. Geraldyn hastily. "Whatever you do, never get that one for a lady again. Did you not hear it fell with Rickman yesterday? It is not safe for Mrs. Gordon. Take Sylvio, he has always carried her beautifully."

He had spoken without thinking, and stopped short, evidently feeling that, under the circumstances, his words might be misconstrued into an attempt to force his horse on Arthur; I did not know what to say, and after a rather awkward pause Arthur replied, in somewhat constrained fashion, that we were much obliged, but as the horse was for sale he did not think it fair to risk it, as I was not the best of horsewomen, he added with a smile.

"Mrs. Gordon only wants nerve; her seat is excellent, she never wrings her horse."

"Sylvio is quite at her service if you cannot get another that you like," said Mr. Geraldyn stiffly.

Seeing something was wrong Walter struck in good-naturedly:

"It's a grand step, Bride, for you to be brave enough to ride in the Phœnix. Kathie had all

the courage of the family, but Mollie bids fair now to be a good horsewoman; she sits her pony bravely."

A few more words passed on indifferent subjects; and then Mr. Geraldyn, who had drawn aside, said suddenly:

"Can I have a word with you, Gordon, before you go out?"

Arthur hesitated a moment. Mr. Geraldyn spoke coldly, and his fair face was set in hard, defiant lines as he waited the answer.

"Could you wait for me a few minutes? I promised Walter to take him to Conolly, the saddler; he does not know where the shop is."

"Oh, certainly, I have no engagement, if I am not in Mrs. Gordon's way," returned Mr. Geraldyn politely.

He was of course requested to remain and make himself at home, but it was patent that there was an uncomfortable constraint between him and Arthur, very different to the usual free, affectionate fashion with which they treated each other, for which they were nicknamed David and Jonathan in the regiment; and I guessed that Arthur was too open and impetuous to have hidden his suspicions as effectually as he wished from his quick-sighted, sensitive friend. I dreaded a *tête-à-tête* with Mr. Geraldyn, so offering him a newspaper, I excused myself, and said I would put on my habit to be in readiness for the proposed airing.

Mr. Geraldyn looked worn and harassed; but though his face bore lines such as are often stamped by dissipation and a reckless life, there was something in the expression of his sad blue eyes that belied it, and I hoped there was some mistake yet, though I knew Major Sutherland rarely spoke as he had done without strong reason.

I dawdled over my dressing as long as I could, but heard no signs of Arthur, so I thought I must return to the visitor. My room adjoined the sitting-room, and entering I saw Mr. Geraldyn had hidden his face in his hands and given way to a despairing and overmastering outbreak of sorrow such as I had once witnessed before; he was quite unconscious of my presence, so I withdrew for a few minutes; then, bethinking myself visitors might come in, and it would be cruel to let him be found thus, I plucked up courage to return, making more noise to warn him he was not alone.

It recalled him to self-control; he sprang up, and, leaning against the mantel-piece, tried to address some commonplace speech to me; but it was almost beyond him, and I busied myself putting aside the wedding cake and other things; the cards, which were duly tied with a silver cord and emblazoned elaborately in silver, dropped, and he picked them up for me, and said sadly:

"I hardly realized my fate till I saw these."

"You knew to-day was the wedding, did you not?"

"I was hardly likely to forget," he said, his eyes looking piteous with trouble. Then, with a pause, he continued: "I was weak enough to hope to the very last that she might change her mind."

Arthur's hasty entrance prevented my answering. He strode up to Mr. Geraldyn, and, with a half-vexed look, exclaimed:

"Cecil, what would I give if you were my fag once more!"

"Are not your boots blacked to your liking? You brought me to great perfection in that noble art."

"I should like to administer a sound thrashing to you, Cis, and you deserve it, lad," said Arthur, laying his hand kindly on his friend's shoulder. "Why could you not tell me why you wanted to sell Sylvio?"

"I told you I required money, it is true," replied Mr. Geraldyn haughtily; "it neither concerns you nor any one else for what reason. The horse is worth what I asked you; but I have no desire to press it on you; Hardy will buy it."

"Yes, and his wife will cut its shoulders to pieces. I saw her hanging on by her stirrups just now and all crooked on her saddle."

"It cannot be helped," said Cecil, though he winced at the description visibly.

"Not if you are too proud to trust your

friends, Cis; it is shabby treatment after all this time, I think. Luckily others are less reticent. This letter was mis-sent to Captain Gordon; I have but just got it," and he handed Mr. Geraldyn a paper. Cecil started violently, and his pale face flushed as he exclaimed with an angry oath:

"Surely he has not——? Oh! it is incredible. Has he no shame? Arthur, how shall I tell you how vexed I am that one of us should have done this?"

He was running his eye hastily over the letter as he spoke, and stamped his foot as he read to the end, "Be sure you do not tell Cecil, &c." He said bitterly:

"No wonder he put that in."

"Cis, lad, don't be a fool," said Arthur hastily. "You are taking this to heart absurdly. I really believe Mrs. Gordon is thinking you have committed some heinous crime. She looks quite scared. No, you need not apologize. I suppose I may explain to her that your brother Bill has got into a woful scrape, boylike, and is trying to work on his friends for money to get him out of what may end in a disgraceful marriage?"

"A marriage? That boy?" I could not help exclaiming.

"Yes indeed, that boy!" said his brother. "And the shame of it is, Mrs. Gordon, not the trouble he is in, but that, not content with asking me for help, he must try to fleece your

husband, and say he asked him rather than me because I was poor, and beg him not to tell me; so that in short he would have got the money twice over."

"And worst of all, Master Cis, you could not openly ask me for my valuable advice."

"How could I, Arthur? Mrs. Gordon, I appeal to you; would it not have been equivalent to asking him for the money, to give my reason for selling Sylvio?"

"And other things," said Arthur drily. "No, sir, your pride was in the way. I should have felt myself no way bound to buy the horse unless I really wanted it; but when you were so mysterious I confess I inferred it had some connection with your frequenting certain localities where Sutherland met you lately."

"You might have had more confidence in me," said Mr. Geraldyn proudly. "I went there to make the Blossom come away."

"I am very sorry for the mistake, Cecil," Arthur answered, holding out his hand.

Mr. Geraldyn grasped it warmly, saying eagerly:

"Never mind, Arthur, not another word. I have been out of sorts lately, and prone to take offence much too easily."

The misunderstanding melted in an instant like frost in sunshine, and it was very clear the two friends were very much relieved to

find themselves restored to the old footing; but Arthur promptly set to work in a business-like way to discuss the letter clause by clause, and I thought it prudent to leave them to their work.

Presently Arthur followed me, saying he had taken the matter into his own hands, very much against Mr. Geraldyn's wishes; but it was clear that he could, as a mere friend, exact terms of Master Bill which his brother could not; and that the affair must be put in the hands of his lawyer and ex-guardian, who was a shrewd, honourable man, for it was too complicated to be dealt with otherwise; and Arthur doubted if Bill had not given too favourable a colouring to the transaction, for his letters did not tally; in short, he had shown himself so wanting in honour and delicacy that his brother was deeply grieved about him, and was blaming himself bitterly for not having set him a better example, and seemed to feel himself more to blame than the boy. It struck me as singular Lord Geraldyn should not be considered more in the matter, and I said as much. Arthur replied that, like all over-easy men, if fairly roused he was far too violent; and Bill, having a cowardly vein in him, dreaded this so that they would not trust him to confess to his father, who, moreover, was little likely to have money or tact to extricate the boy, and being with all his

shortcomings scrupulously honourable, would be very hard on Bill.

"I had meant to spend this money on you, Bride," Arthur added very regretfully. "I intend to enforce its repayment by degrees, but that will not be the same thing."

I assured him truthfully I had far rather it were employed to save the lad, who was quite young enough to do well yet, and added I was glad the explanation had so entirely cleared Mr. Geraldyn.

"Ah, I was absurdly over-anxious about him," Arthur said smiling. "But Douglas began his downfall so similarly, I thought history was going to repeat itself."

I found I was to ride Sylvio after all, and Mr. Geraldyn had been persuaded to accompany us on the quietest of his half-broken colts. Walter was also of the party, and Mr. Geraldyn's face brightened for the first time as he returned Sylvio's caresses. The beautiful petted creature was even more demonstrative than usual, and I realized as it claimed its master's notice what a sacrifice he would have felt it to part with his favourite, especially to be ridden indifferently, and indeed he confessed that from the day he determined to sell Sylvio he had never had heart to go to the stable as usual.

CHAPTER XI.

'Let the toast pass, drink to the lass;
I warrant she'll prove an excuse for the glass."

ARTHUR was to dine at mess that night, to which many of the dignitaries of Dublin were invited, and promised to fetch me afterwards for the dance, as I was nervous of entering alone. When he came, he informed me to my surprise that I had been toasted with full honours; and explained that when, as usual, "The Ladies" were proposed, Mr. Geraldyn rose, and added that one should be specially named, he thought, as she was known to so many present, and it would be wanting in courtesy if they omitted to toast the bride of the day, namely, the Marchioness of Headland. "And then he went on to say he considered it impossible not to unite her sister's name also, and added a very pretty remark as to the gratitude he personally felt for your kindness in his danger. And the speech taking every one's fancy, both you and Kathie were toasted, cheered, and everything else."

"I wonder Mr. Geraldyn could do it," I remarked. "I am afraid he does not forget her."

"His usual fashion of extremes; his pride

drove him to brave it out and seem indifferent; but as he sat down he turned as white as death, and Sutherland glanced at him and filled his glass with brandy, which pulled him together. But come now, dear, we must go."

The rooms were very picturesque with military decorations of swords, colours, and other things, and the richly-laced uniforms set off the contrasting colours of the ladies' dresses. Most of the younger men were there, but many preferred their wine to the society of the fair sex, and had not quitted the table.

Mrs. Saville, crowned by an imposing turban, and the inevitable Roman warrior, was receiving the guests, and gave me a warning frown as I was escorted to a sofa by Major Sutherland, but since he had asked my help he was always friendly to me, and no man could treat a lady with greater respect if she gave him no cause to do otherwise.

"So David and Jonathan are reunited," he remarked, after some ordinary phrases had passed between us.

"Did they differ?" I asked, not wishing to enter into the matter.

He gave me a keen glance, and laughed.

"Diplomacy is neither your *forte* nor Gordon's. Your face is too transparently telltale, and Gordon goes as straight at everything as he does at his fences. I used to marvel what such a manly fellow saw in that slip of a boy, with his womanish daintiness

and fopperies, but there is more than one fancied in Master Cecil, though he's born a few centuries too late."

"What does that signify?"

"Why, he is cut out for the knight of old, who went about poking his lance through other men's ribs if they would not swear his lady excelled all other females, and having spent some years in this highly-edifying occupation, returned to find the heroine either faithless or a nun, when he usually eschewed dinners and soap for the rest of his life, and turned hermit."

"At present Mr. Geraldyn shows no symptoms of regarding the use of soap as unnecessary," I said, seeing him a little way from us as carefully and elaborately attired as his uniform permitted him to be.

"He is at present in the chivalrous stage; gets the credit of revelling in the lowest form of rowdyism, to keep an ill-conditioned young cur like Narcissus Green out of his native element, to which he will inevitably return, like the swine to the mire, and risks the most painful of deaths to save a dirty brat's worthless life."

"When did the last exploit take place?" I said in astonishment.

"Just before mess. There was a blazing house in one of the little back slums close by, and I strolled with him to see it; suddenly a child, who had been forgotten, appeared at an

upper window; the crowd groaned, shrieked, swore, and prayed, but resigned it to its fate; up goes Geraldyn like a cat, and saved it though there was a hundred to one against the thing being feasible, for the fire was strong and the ladder too short."

"Why, it was as brave as going off the ship into the sea," I said warmly.

"Do you think indirect attempts at suicide justifiable?" replied the major coolly. "Geraldyn has, apparently, some scruples of conscience about shortening his life in regulation fashion, so attempts it otherwise, and does not succeed. Death should be counted of your sex, Mrs. Gordon; pursue her, she eludes you; flee from her, she seizes you unawares."

For all his cynical talk, the major at heart was proud of his subaltern's courage, although when he strolled up at the moment to remind me of the dances I had promised him, Major Sutherland asked very curtly;

"How is your arm, Geraldyn?"

"Better, thank you, sir, since I have been to Probyn. If you had not given me that brandy I should have made an exhibition of myself at mess."

"Serve you right if you had. What business had you to go singeing your ambrosial locks in a fire when we have ladies here, and you are our show-specimen of the dandy genus?"

"Thank you, sir; I am afraid I cannot appropriate the compliment. Courtington reigns supreme: his lithp is irresistible, and his eyeglass, he flatters himself, is as attractive to the fair sex as a candle to moths."

"Why have you not a sling for your arm?" I asked. "Is it burnt?"

"I do not desire to pose as an interesting invalid, Mrs. Gordon. Probyn describes it as 'superficially scorched,' which is not serious."

"A ladder was fetched in the nick of time, or you would be a cinder, young man. What an ingenious ruffian that fellow was, first magnanimously refusing all pay until his carroty-headed wife whispered reproachfully, 'Mick, honey, sure you could be blind dhrunk for a week on the gould,' then saying bashfully, 'the crathur that owned him had remoinded him 'twould be powerful onlucky for us if he didn't dhrink our healths, or else he wouldn't take the value of one glass even.'"

"I must find a partner," said Mr. Geraldyn very suddenly, and he beat a hasty retreat just as Mrs. Hardy arrived.

"Oh, you two *naughty* things!" she cried, in her usual affected way, "philandering away like this. Mrs. Gordon, don't you know Sutherland is a *shocking* creature? Does Gordon let you talk to him openly?"

"I should certainly not do otherwise," I replied. "I usually talk to every one openly."

"Now, Mrs. Hardy, if you and I know more

than we tell, you need not go naming it to every one," said the major coolly.

"I know anything, Sutherland? Why, I was a baby when I married, and unluckily was thought rather a beauty, so John has kept me like a nun in a convent," and Mrs. Hardy first simpered and then sighed, and added, "I am playing a little game of Bopeep with that silly creature, Geraldyn; he is looking everywhere for me. Oh! he will see me!" and she ducked her head with a little childish scream.

Having seen Mr. Geraldyn's hasty manœuvre, I could hardly help laughing at her version of the matter, but the major answered imperturbably:

"Being an Irishman, of course Geraldyn is chasing you by running in an opposite direction. He's true to his nation."

"Take care!" I said laughing. "Remember I'm one as well as Mr. Geraldyn."

"An Irishman?" responded the major mischievously. "That speech proves the fact, certainly. Mrs. Hardy, Cecil is faithless; there he goes with Lady Grey on his arm."

Mrs. Hardy's eyes flashed angrily, and turning to me she said, in a disagreeable tone:

"I hope you brought my pretty Sylvio in safely to-day? It was rather stretching a point to lend it you, but I don't mind for once."

"I was not aware the horse was yours," I said, feeling very much annoyed. "I must apologize for inadvertently taking such a liberty with your property."

"Did not that naughty Cecil tell you? Oh, I will scold him. The fact is, he wants money —you must not really ask why," and Mrs. Hardy hid her face with her fan, peeping over the top archly. "It's really *too* naughty, but boys will be boys, and he *will* tell me all his private affairs. I quite dread the major finding out."

"Finding out Geraldyn's peccadilloes?" said Major Sutherland. "Oh, we do not look too closely into our subalterns' amusements; it's naughty, but it's nice, I conclude. Such old soldiers as you and I, Mrs. Hardy, are not easily shocked, are we?"

"Speak for yourself, Sutherland. If you knew my age when I married——"

"And added Minnie's to it, I might solve the problem," replied the major coolly, looking her straight in the face. "Where is Minnie, Mrs. Hardy? she must be getting quite a woman."

"Oh dear, dear, what are you thinking of?" cried the lady indignantly. "Dear little Tottiekin, she is at school with other babies like herself. It is better for her, sweet pet, than seeing exhibitions of her father's jealousy."

"Because I was babyishly pleased at

Geraldyn's saying I was the only woman he could bear to see on his pet. The major would have changed his mind about buying Sylvio, only matters had gone too far."

"Indeed? I wonder Geraldyn could retract, then," said Major Sutherland provokingly. "He has determined to keep the horse, and told your husband so."

"I see it all!" cried Mrs. Hardy, striking a tragic attitude. "Geraldyn has foregone the money to save me, seeing the storm that was gathering over me. Noble fellow!"

"Don't distress yourself. Unless Geraldyn is a consummate actor, I should say he was positively overjoyed at not being obliged to part with the beast he is childishly fond of; probably he got the money otherwise."

The major glanced at me meaningly, and I felt my colour rise, to my vexation, and Mrs. Hardy noting it said spitefully:

"Ah, well, he will tell me all. Men *will* confide in me, somehow. Arthur—dear me, Gordon I must say now—used to turn to me for everything. You must not mind, Mrs. Gordon, it's *all* over now, for I always drive him away if he forgets; things are not as they were with us."

I was almost provoked to give her a very sharp answer, but the major's face of delighted amusement recalled my prudence, and I only said coldly:

"How considerate of you."

"Ah, I see you are wise and think bygones should be bygones, it is *so* much best!" she replied, and sailed off with knowing nods and signs fluttering her voluminous draperies. My companion leaning back laughed heartily, saying:

"She is as good as a play and cheaper. Was ever woman so devoured of vanity before? Can she fancy one believes that farrago of falsehoods?"

"I am sure I don't know," I said, so petulantly that he laughed the more.

"You cheated me, Mrs. Gordon. I fondly hoped for a genuine feminine breeze with sweet speeches neatly veiling waspish meanings."

"I am glad I foiled you then," I retorted. "You looked just as if you were trying to incite terriers to fight."

"Oh! what an impolite simile! You are doing me woful injustice, Mrs. Gordon. Come, let us join the dance that is forming, if you will so far honour me. By-the-bye, I hope you were duly informed we had the pleasure of toasting you to-night?"

"I am obliged for the compliment."

"And we were rejoiced at the opportunity. Another of Geraldyn's feats. I wonder who else would have had the hardihood to drink to his own death sentence? for with his curious temper it was equivalent almost. He was within an ace of fainting."

"He said the pain of the burn affected him," I replied.

"Yes? Ah, no doubt it was the burn, and the burn only," said the major smiling.

CHAPTER XII.

"But, I'm sorry to add,
Things are almost as bad
A great deal nearer home; and that very mad pranks
Among young men who move in the very first ranks
Are by no means confined to the land of the Franks."

THE rooms were crowded and hot when Mr. Geraldyn came to seek me for the second time.

"If you will forego this dance, there is a much cooler place," he said, as we threaded our way with difficulty through the throng.

I assented, and we went to one of the many smaller rooms thrown open for the dancers to rest in, where through the open window the night breeze blew in pleasantly.

"I tried to get off my last dance, but Mrs. Hardy turned a deaf ear to my suggestions," Mr. Geraldyn remarked. "She wished to show off her proficiency."

"How does this suit your arm? Surely you would be better in your room? that tight uniform must hurt you needlessly?"

"If I give in to-night I should be voted a malingerer, and never hear the last of it. I can bear a little pain better than jesting on some subjects."

I suspected the pain was more than a little,

for his restless, excitable mood and the heat were likely to increase the inflammation of the burn. But he went on laughing and talking as if he were in the highest spirits, and in so unusual a fashion that I could tell his gaiety was forced, and was but to show a good front and ward off pity or joking, which were alike galling to his proud, sensitive temper; so I endeavoured to meet him on his own ground, but unsuccessfully, for, suddenly dropping his light tone, he said:

"It seems I cannot deceive you, Mrs. Gordon; you are too well aware of the depths of weakness I am capable of. At least you are too tender of all pain to despise me for it, any more than you do for this burn."

"No one can help suffering," I replied. "Why should you think any one could despise you when you bear it so well?"

"I have taxed your patience pretty often too in the past, but I will not do so again," he said. "Just this I would like to tell you. To say I shall think no more of Kathleen because she is wedded would be as vain as to promise not to draw my breath; but I will hold her as the most sacred thing on earth, and I will swear to live so that she need not be ashamed to remember I was her lover."

"If you keep that resolve you will gain content, if not such happiness as you once hoped for."

"Perhaps I may some day," he replied with

a half-sad smile; "but future ease is hard to realize when one is still under the surgeon's knife."

He was silent for a few minutes, then went on, "I beguiled you here, Mrs. Gordon, to tell you how grateful I am to Arthur for his kindness about that unlucky brother of mine."

Seeing it would gratify Mr. Geraldyn to talk of the matter of his brother, I let him, being not loath to hear Arthur praised; and indeed he had managed admirably to give the foolish lad prompt help, yet not free him so entirely from all obligation to repay the money that he would be tempted to repeat his folly forgetting what it had cost others.

Presently the doctor joined us.

"You are neglecting all my advice, sir; you have been dancing, getting hot, that arm has been knocked about. What have you to say?" he asked.

"That I have every intention of repeating the offence. Am I to go on the sick list for a mere scorch?"

"Men have died of a pin prick," replied the doctor sententiously.

"Even that awful fate will not scare me. I mean to make a night of it," said Mr. Geraldyn jestingly; but a gruff voice broke in suddenly:

"Now look here, Geraldyn; there has been a confounded deal too much of this nonsensical

fooling going on. I thought that a better example might be expected from you. If there's any more I shall take care an example of another sort's made of some of you." And the adjutant, who was the speaker, clanked out of the door, grumbling inaudible maledictions on something or somebody.

"Oh, my prophetic soul, my uncle! My fate is sealed," laughed Mr. Geraldyn. "Nothing ever gets an idea out of old Stiff's head; and if Larry's lambs make their usual war-cries to-night, were I to prove I had spent the time in the Antipodes I should be found guilty."

"I should be only too glad to hear you were in close arrest if it would keep you quiet," growled the doctor. "I do not believe you have had a dinner or been in bed for a week."

"Excellent training! If the proposed steeplechase comes off I shall not have to reduce my weight."

"There was an Arab who tried to educate his mare to live on a straw a day; do you know the result?" was the doctor's parting shot as we returned to the ball-room, where dancing went on so long that next morning Arthur overslept himself, and would not wait for breakfast. Walter and father were by no means early, but as Arthur did not return we waited no longer, and had finished some time when at length he and Larry came in. By

their faces I guessed there was something afloat, and Arthur promptly turned to Larry saying:

"Now look here, Master Larry; I want to know the right of all this. How comes Geraldyn to be implicated and you not, when I'll swear you were at the fore-front of the mischief? How did you escape being put under arrest?"

"That puzzles me more than it can yourself," said Larry with an air of absurd candour.

"Now come, no fooling, sir; there is something inexplicable in this affair; how much do you know?"

"Are your remarks addressed to your subaltern, or as a fond relative to a starving fellow-creature?" said Larry pathetically.

"Starving? Why, you have had breakfast enough for three," said Arthur laughing.

"It's not good manners to comment on your friends' appetites, and I'm a growing choild."

"Growing in grace I should think," said Walter. "May one inquire what is in the wind, Gordon?"

"I'll be hanged if any one knows, to the best of my belief," replied Arthur. "There was Bedlam let loose as usual, the adjutant went up to order the row to cease, and got capsized backwards down the stairs. He has arrested Geraldyn, who says he never left his room when once he went to it, though he

was not in bed when Stiff invaded his territory at daybreak."

"What will be done to him?" I cried, startled at his prediction being so soon verified.

"Oh, he is detained in his room with a sentry at the door. Did you picture instant execution, Bride? The doctor reports that he is lying down as his arm had been painful, and kept him awake, and he said probably Stiff would presently be open to conviction that he was not in the passage running on all fours."

"What is that?" said Larry suddenly.

"The adjutant swears Cis ran between his legs purposely, and that he could not be mistaken, for he saw the crimson smoking gown and his fair hair; that on picking himself up he went at once to Geraldyn's room, and he was wearing the garment and his bed was unused. The odd thing is that the fellow who really did it has not acknowledged to the thing."

Larry, who had listened intently, here threw himself down on the sofa, in such fits of laughter that not an intelligible word could be extracted; at every attempt to speak he went off into fresh peals, till, utterly exhausted and holding his aching sides, he was obliged to stop; and after one or two more ineffectual efforts, he gasped out at last:

"I'll niver get over it! Oh! 'twill be the

death of me entirely! Sure 'twas the pig he mistook for Cis."

With general exclamations, an explanation was demanded, when Larry informed us that the wild boys had got a pig and secreted it in his room till after the departure of the guests, when, robed in a red dressing-gown with a wig made of tow and frilled nightcap, the poor animal was to have been put in bed beside the Blossom, who would probably be sleeping heavily after a liberal share of champagne: but on the adjutant's inopportune arrival the mischievous lads disappeared in a general *sauve qui peut*, like schoolboys caught by their master, and the pig escaping made a rush doubtless down the passage and overthrew the adjutant, who being short-sighted mistook his assailant.

The narrative was so interrupted by Larry's renewed fits of laughter, it took some time to understand it properly, but there was no doubt whatever that it was correct. Larry had himself recaptured the pig, while others picked up the damaged adjutant, who, sorely bruised and much exasperated, strode at once to Mr. Geraldyn's room, and finding him up at such an hour, and wearing the Indian morning gown, considered him the offender, and would listen to nothing to the contrary, being, in fact, too angry to hear reason.

In the meantime the pig escaped detection, being safe under Larry's bed.

"You will get off easy, Larry. Stiff can hardly make another example after such a mistake," said Arthur, who had laughed too much to lecture Larry.

"Oh, I'll enlighten him with all the pleasure in loife. What will it be manners to say, I wonder? Will I tell him 'twas small blame to him, for sure Cecil's as much like the pig as he is to the Blossom? and the adjutant swears they've got hair just of a shade."

"What a compliment to Geraldyn, seeing you could light your pipe at Mr. Green's hair, it's so red," remarked Walter.

"Well, will I go at once to Stiff?" demanded Larry. "The barracks are but the pelt of a stone away, and I'll be back to breakfast."

A delicate hint at which Arthur laughed not a little, and answered that Mr. Geraldyn would be much better quiet in his room, and he would go with Larry when they had had something to eat, and they would clear up the matter.

"Ah, it's a terrible thing to have such a capacious heart," said Larry gravely as he helped himself to a liberal plateful of ham.

"Heart?" said father smiling. "I would have been led to suppose you might have named another part of your interior economy as likely to increase Bride's housekeeping account."

"Ah, bedad, it's cause and effect, sir. Sure love's an exhausting passion; one must eat to support its ravages. Oh dear! if only there were not so many pretty girls in the world, or one could marry them all!"

"Who is the last, Larry?" I asked.

"Miss O'Flanagan Jones, of course," said Arthur, "a head taller than himself."

"I like foine women, and she reminds me just the least taste in life of Lady Rachel."

"Love is proverbially blind," I said; "Lady Rachel is beautiful."

"And he thinks the lamp-post is lovely," said Arthur. "By-the-bye, Mr. Kavanagh, you are not aware Larry wished to become my stepfather?"

"And if my lady had only been my own age and willing, would I not have stepfathered you, that's all!"

"Considering you are considerably Arthur's junior, Lady Rachel would have been his mother before she was born herself, at that rate," remarked father, as we dispersed, Arthur and Larry to find the adjutant, and Walter and I to the town to buy presents for all at home, which he was to take for me. Arthur had bid me spare nothing and forget no one, so it was a pleasant morning's work, and when our purchases were collected there were quite a large box full, for every servant in the house had something.

Father told me I was extravagant, but he

was glad enough that one of his sons-in-law should be so fond of the old home, as I could see.

"It is a pity Mollie is not of an age to console Mr. Geraldyn," he said smiling; "there is something very charming about the poor fellow."

"Why, father, are you turning match-maker?" I said. "Is that the reason you invited him to Ballydorough?"

"Well, stranger things have happened," said Walter. "After all, Mollie will not be too young for him ten years hence, and I vow she will outshine Kathie yet for looks."

"And father being so far-seeing in such matters," I laughed, "has realized at last that daughters do get married."

"And turn into very saucy matrons when their husbands spoil them," said father. "Come, madam, that over-indulgent spouse of yours promised to meet us at the quay side."

So we drove down to the little sloop in which they were to return to Wexford, and I received a warm greeting from the men to whom it belonged, who remembered me. We saw them warp out, and stand away to sea with a fair breeze, and returned to find Mr. Geraldyn, who, after his old fashion, had come in to dine quietly.

"I have come to take refuge," he said laughing. "Stiff's mistake is too delicious

to be let pass, and I am greeted with grunts and squeaks everywhere."

I inquired for the burn, seeing his arm in a sling, but he declared it much better, and giving him no pain.

There was, as usual, plenty for the men to talk of with regard to Buonaparte, who was a stock-subject of conversation in those days, and I sat by with my work and listened, till somehow they dropped into reminiscences of school-days; and then while they lingered over their dessert Mr. Geraldyn asked me to sing, and going to the piano I went on stringing together all the old ballads I could remember. Leaving their wine Arthur and he came in to listen; I had just finished,

"For I'm the hair-apparent to the ould boghole,"

when in rushed Larry headlong, evidently the bearer of some news and in the wildest excitement, but almost too breathless to speak intelligibly, and gasped out:

"The French are here, all the fleet; that is, they will be immediately, if not sooner; or at least there's a new revolution, and we're off to fight anyway. Hurra!"

The other men sprang up eagerly with flashing eyes, Arthur caught Larry by the shoulder and gave him a shake.

"Pull yourself together and talk sense, man. What is the news? Where did you get it?"

Larry, however, could tell little more; he had been dining out in Dublin and knew really only the rumours with which the town was ringing suddenly. He did not even know what the positive facts were, but had just heedlessly put together a random collection of hearsay scraps; but it was evident there was some sudden panic, and Arthur at once determined to go to barracks and hear what was authenticated, for even in the street there was beginning to be a commotion and stir.

Larry, too eager to be still, accompanied him, but Mr. Geraldyn seeing I was excited and nervous remained, and I was glad of a companion at the moment, for half-heard tidings are far worse than certainties.

It was some time before Arthur returned, and when he came he was not by any means certain of what had really occurred. Rumour said the French fleet either had effected a landing on the West coast or were about to do so, but it was very vague, and the nearer calamity of a fresh outbreak of civil war in the North seemed scarcely confirmed. But what affected us more nearly was that the left half battalion was under orders for immediate readiness to go to the front, and this included Arthur, Larry, Mr. Geraldyn, and some of the others whom we knew best.

"There was a question about your fitness, Cecil," Arthur remarked.

"Mine? What is the chief dreaming of? Oh, the burn; it's not my sword arm even if it were not almost well. I'll report myself at once, though."

He went and we discussed what was to be done. Arthur would have left me in Dublin, but I dreaded parting from him, and, as he knew, I was strong and well able to rough it a little; moreover, none could tell how long Dublin might be safe, or where the next flame of rebellion might break forth. So he gave in and consented to my going wherever Mrs. Saville did, and I was secretly rejoiced the news had come no sooner, lest I had been sent away with father and Walter.

There was great commotion in Dublin as the news spread, nothing being positively authenticated; the most exaggerated reports were believed and communicated—losing, of course, nothing in the telling.

Many families prepared to fly to England; the packet boat was crowded with fugitives, who hardly knew where they were going or what they were escaping from. Some said the whole French army, headed by Buonaparte himself, was upon us; others that there was a conspiracy to burn Dublin and kill every one.

The most cranky little fishing-boats were chartered at fabulous prices by those who missed the packet, and the panic grew hourly.

Mrs. Hardy was sorely divided between her

desire to pose as a heroine before all men, and her actual terror.

As Colonel Saville was bound for the scene of active service, Major Hardy would remain in command, and his wife foresaw advantages for herself in this position, and between her spasms of panic discussed the desirability of getting up numerous entertainments "to keep up people's spirits."

She haunted my rooms hourly, much to my hindrance, for I was busy packing and consulting with Mrs. Saville as to our best method of traversing the country, and had no time to spare to listen to Mrs. Hardy's variation of feeling. At one moment she would arrive full of some terrible account of imminent danger, and half an hour later looked in to say it was a myth, and to ask for advice on the subject of a new bonnet.

CHAPTER XIII.

"You know the rest, in the books you have read,
How the British regulars turned and fled;
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farmyard wall;
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,
And crossing the fields to emerge again;
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load."

"WHERE there's a will there's a way." Mrs. Saville had a friend returning to Athlone; he was a county magistrate of great influence and good property, and besides his own strong escort of mounted men, meant to avail himself of the fact of the troops marching to that town, and so under his care we could not run much risk, and he was willing to charge himself with us, as we were the only two who meant to go, and were neither encumbered with much baggage nor maid servants, but could rough it if necessary.

There seemed no fear of any encounter with rebels before reaching Athlone, and indeed we had a very safe journey, quite free from even any alarms, though there were rumours flying of all sorts of dangers ahead of us, but little certainty till we reached Athlone; when there were sure tidings that the French had effected a landing at Killala, and driven out the weak garrison, which

consisted but of a few yeomanry and a party of the Prince of Wales' Fencibles, not sixty men in all; they had fought valiantly, but were overpowered by numbers, and my good cousin Bishop Stock was also reported to be in the hands of the French; whether dead or alive none could tell, for there were, of course, many contradictory rumours. We remained at Athlone a day or two while other troops came in, and to rest our men, who had undergone very hard marching.

The necessities of the time brought out men's real characters, and among the juniors Larry and Mr. Geraldyn had specially approved themselves to the older officers who were more seasoned to their work; Larry's bright, gay, brave spirit carried him through everything cheerily; and Mr. Geraldyn's singular unselfishness rendered him indifferent to privation, if he could by giving up any advantage benefit a comrade, for in the hasty journey there had naturally been ample opportunities for thus forgetting personal comfort.

I managed to cater very successfully at Athlone before the regiment arrived, as the town was still well supplied, and was proud of the many compliments I received from those whom Arthur brought in to meals; altogether in spite of anxiety we were merry enough often, and my lodgings were quite good; so even Arthur, tender as he was of me, could

not so far say I had been much incommoded. The older men were cheerful from the courage and resolution of soldierly experience, and the young ones, thoughtless and gay, making light of danger. Larry's old friends were there, the foxhunters—or rather a troop of them—and they welcomed him of course warmly.

The orders soon came, though, to proceed to Tuam; as this little town would be strongly defended we ladies were carried on there.

It was a small, poor place, by no means so convenient as Athlone. I managed to find tolerably decent rooms, and a strong, red-headed girl—Anty Dooley—who was willing to do what little she could to help me in the kitchen, and at least she could boil potatoes, make stirabout, and clean the pots. Here the news reached us that Generals Hutchinson and Trench were at Castlebar with what troops they could collect, and we also learnt that the viceroy was following apace from Dublin.

There was a day's interval, and then I heard that the ladies must remain at Tuam, while the regiment joined the others at Castlebar ready to receive the French, who, under Humbert their commander, were expected to advance.

The Kerry Militia and the Kilkenny Fusiliers were also known to be on their way with the Longford yeomanry. Lord Mo-

hurry's foxhunters would go with ours, and it was reported there were four six-pounder guns and a howitzer at Castlebar.

It was a twenty-mile march and by day-break we were astir, for I determined Arthur at least should not go away famished. There would be time to cry when I could do nothing more for his comfort, so I would not stay to think, but busied myself preparing the best I had, and even made a show of sharing the meal. The last kisses nearly brought the tears as he told me I was sending him off with a good heart, and he had dreaded my break-ing down, as it would have unnerved him too. Luckily for my self-control, Larry ran in for a farewell hug, and Arthur asked him if he had breakfasted.

"Short commons? Never mind!" and he laughed gaily as he said it.

"You have five minutes, make up, lad, if you can," and Arthur was gone; but Larry, who could do wonders in the time, kept me too busy waiting on him for thought.

"Here is Cis!" he exclaimed, as Mr. Geraldyn entered. "Bride, you may be sure he has looked after every one but himself; cannot you make him feed too?"

Mr. Geraldyn accepted some chocolate and bread gratefully; there was no time for more, the bugle sounded their summons. Larry rushed off, his comrade lingered an instant to grasp my hands and say earnestly:

"I'll give my life to save Arthur's for you, if need be. God bless you for all your kindness to me," and he went before I could answer.

From my windows I could see them all fall in and hear the words of command, even exchange one last look with Arthur, and then they marched off and were out of sight in a few minutes.

I had never realized what the sense of utter desolation would be till then, and throwing myself in a chair, I sobbed as if my heart would break. I do not know how long I had been weeping when I felt a hand on my shoulder, and looking up, found Mrs. Saville by me, and throwing myself into her arms I cried the more. She seated herself in the chair and took me in her strong, tender arms as if I were a child, pillowed my head on her shoulder, and let me sob my grief out; then, when it was spent a little, she began to talk in her cheery, kind way, telling me, by the look of the table, I had been a good girl and sent my husband away with food to sustain him, and not taken up the time with billing and cooing.

"And trust me, my dear, I'm an old campaigner," said the good lady, "and it's a much better way to show your love, and the men will send more thoughts back to you if you start them with a good meal and a brave smile."

So she chatted on, and helped me tidy the room, and then, while she kept me busy, she told me lots of her own experiences, and dwelt on the fact that many dreary presentiments had never come true, but S—— had reappeared safe and sound from the wars, while his elder brother died from a fall over a hassock in his own study.

And when my rooms were in order she carried me off to visit some of our soldiers who were down with illness, and took them some broth and other things.

Somehow the long, tedious day wore away, and then the kind, motherly soul took me home with her to have supper and spend the night, for she feared I would be growing nervous and fretting again if I were alone.

And when we had prayed for them all, we went to bed and slept soundly enough after all.

The morning dawned again, bright and sunny. Mrs. Saville set me to seek for provisions in the town and prepare soup and other things, rather, I fancied, to keep me from anxious misgivings, for it seemed unlikely any one would come from the front to share our meals that day.

Late in the afternoon there was a commotion in the main street, a narrow unpaved thoroughfare, and, gathering that there were tidings of some import, I hurried out, followed by Mrs. Saville, to see Major Sutherland lifted from a

horse, his handsome uniform all stained with blood and dirt, and he himself unable to stand without help; while another panting horse, almost dropping with fatigue, bore Jack Hunt and the Blossom, in little better plight than the major.

They were speedily helped or carried into the house which had been taken as a sort of hospital, and we followed in terrible anxiety, for there was such dejection about them that we could but fear the worst.

The Blossom was groaning, and while the doctor attended him I gave Major Sutherland some wine, and after a long draught he said bitterly:

"We are defeated—disgraced!"

"Arthur?" I exclaimed, unable to say more in my dismay.

"Safe!—at least, when I left them, and the colonel too," he said, answering Mrs. Saville's entreating look.

"What has happened?" she cried. "Don't say we're beaten, man! You must be in delirium!"

"I wish I were," he returned. "We three are just the forerunners of the rout; it's effectual."

"Where is Larry?" I said, ashamed of having forgotten him for the greater anxiety.

"He was unhurt; he stood by me when my horse was shot under me or I should not be here, for my leg is broken and they were

beginning to pike me, but Kavanagh pushed me against the wall saying, 'Hould up, major, or there's but one word to say—us two's a corpse,'" said the major smiling. "Then Gordon saw us and came to the rescue with Geraldyn."

"Is he safe too?" said Mrs. Saville, who seemed hardly able to take in the calamity.

"Yes; the boy has a charmed life, I believe. He got his shako knocked off somehow, and as we fought hand to hand on Castlebar bridge in the thickest of the *mêlée* his fair hair shone among the worst of the fighting, and served as a rallying point for his men. Gordon fought like a hero as he always did, but Geraldyn stuck to him, and I saw him ward off several thrusts that were made at Gordon."

"Now, Sutherland, what can we do for you?" said Mrs. Saville, who craved for work to rouse her from the dull dismay of the ungrasped terror and grief of the situation.

The doctor bustled in just as she spoke, and after a hasty examination sent me to the two young men, and bade me give them soup and stay with them, as he had a long business here.

They were both painfully but not dangerously wounded. Mr. Hunt was the most hurt by far, but his companion had neither fortitude nor stamina, and was depressed almost to tears, so his descriptions were most lugubrious. He foretold that we should all be murdered, or

at least taken prisoners, and drew such heart-rending pictures of the horrors awaiting us, that it had the effect of raising my spirits from pure contradictiousness, and as he magnified the numbers of the foe to an extent that even I knew to be absurd, I put the less credence on his words.

Mr. Hunt, though in pain, was cheery and patient, glad of food and thankful to be in bed, for the ride had put him to torture; how the major had held on with his fractured leg seemed a marvel, but he was a man of iron will and frame.

Arthur had with some of the others caught two loose horses, and got them on, and the colonel ordered them to ride for their lives. So far, they believed, only one of our officers was killed, but many soldiers were dead or wounded, and some officers of other regiments.

I did not encourage them to talk too much, for the catastrophe was so sudden and unlooked for, the mere fact seemed enough as yet, and one could not take in details.

My place was taken by one of the soldiers at last, and I was free to go to our rooms and wait and watch in sickening dread as the time went on and Arthur came not. It was growing dark, and there were sounds in the town now and then which died off suddenly again, and hope had nearly given way to despair, when there was suddenly a quick, soldierly step under the window. Arthur had come back

to me, and everything else was forgotten in the joy of that moment.

He sat down, still holding me closely, but did not speak till I asked for Larry.

"Quite safe, thank God, but carried on possibly to Athlone. It is an indescribably disgraceful rout," he replied very sadly, "every one flying in hopeless confusion. The colonel and a few more of us rallied what men we could, and brought them away in some form."

"You are sure you are unhurt?" I said.

"I have not a scratch, but I had the narrowest escape; several set on me, and by force of numbers nearly disabled me; Cecil saved me at the last extremity, and almost by a miracle."

"Ah! how good of him to keep his word to me so well. Where is he till I thank him?" I cried.

I felt Arthur's strong frame quiver with a sob as he answered after a moment:

"Cecil is dead!"

"Dead?" I repeated, hardly comprehending.

"Yes, dear," Arthur said gently. "He lost his life in defending me; my sword was gone, and as I was trying to snatch another, a man put a pistol close to me, Cecil threw himself before it, and received the charge in his temple."

"You saw him killed?" I said shuddering.

"Yes, darling; I saw him fall back. The

charge must have gone right through his brain; death would be instantaneous."

"And you had to leave him there?" I whispered.

"When the spirit was gone, the body mattered little," Arthur said sadly. "He lies on Castlebar bridge."

It did not really matter, as I knew, but it seemed so sad that one who had been almost part of our daily life lay so far away, unburied among enemies, who might not even respect the sanctity of the dead, that I began to cry at the thought; and I think more tears than mine were shed at Cecil Geraldyn's fate.

The living must be cared for, though, and I remembered Arthur was tired and fasting. He took the food I set before him mechanically, as a duty he had to go through.

Between the disgrace and chagrin of defeat and the loss of his dearest friend, he was unutterably dejected and depressed, and seemed unable to rouse himself. However, while making his meal he told me how some of the troops had been commanded to march to Foxford, through which town it was considered inevitable the French would come, as the general believed the Barnageerah pass inaccessible, which was the only other route to Castlebar. But at length a yeoman alarmed the garrison at the latter town by riding in to say he had seen a strong column of men in blue marching towards the pass; for, in truth,

to men in light marching order, with only two curricle guns, the pass presented no great difficulties, though it could have been most easily defended.

The Castlebar garrison was, on the alarm, marched out to some adjacent heights, and soon the French appeared, marching in close column. They were greeted by a cannon-ball, which caused them heavy loss, and after a few minutes they changed their plan of attack; and here began the first mistake on our side, the militia opening fire before the enemy were in range. The French rushed forward *en tirailleur* and extended, with a view of outflanking the royalists. The militia wavered, and the guns were carried away by a bold dash of the enemy.

By great exertions, the officers rallied men of all regiments on the bridge round a curricle gun, but many of the soldiers were already in full retreat. A galling cross-fire raked the bridge from the roads and houses near; again and again the officers rallied their men, even resisting the cavalry charges; but at length it was hopeless to resist and a mere waste of life to remain longer, and reluctantly they were forced to retreat, their rear still harassed by the French hussars, till a few of Lord Mohurry's Foxhunters rallied, charged back, and scattered them. After that there was nothing but a wild flight, panic seemingly reigning among the English, many of whom

actually passed Tuam, and never stayed till they had put miles between themselves and the French.

No idea could be formed of the killed and wounded, but it was afterwards proved to amount to two or three hundred missing. Some, however, were taken prisoners, and there were so many deserters, that, combined with the mistaken orders of the general, this partly accounted for the defeat. Castlebar remained in the hands of the French.

Arthur told me all this briefly, and said:

"I should think one of your cousins, the Stocks, was on the bridge; there was such a double to Larry as I have seldom seen."

"To Larry? Edwin and Arthur Stocks were not much like him from what I remember."

"This lad was a foxhunter, and I saw him try to cut down the man who shot Cecil, but ineffectually."

"It seems a bad dream that Mr. Geraldyn is dead," I said sadly.

"I wish it were one," Arthur replied, as he left the room.

The little passage was dark, and I heard him stumble and give an exclamation, and in a moment he returned, carrying something.

"Get a light, Bride," he cried. "Some one was lying outside, dead or swooned. I believe it is the very boy that I told you of."

I went to my bedroom for the tinder-box,

and Arthur laid down his burden and began to unfasten the uniform. Suddenly I heard him call me eagerly :

"Bride! Bride! Quick! This is no boy. My God! Am I in my senses? It is Kathleen!"

Discrediting my ears, I got a candle and scanned the prostrate figure ; but there was no mistaking her.

Kathleen it was, in foxhunter's uniform ; her long hair cut close to her head and curling in a short crop like Larry's, increasing the resemblance to him tenfold.

The unbuttoned tunic showed her lovely white neck, and she drew her breath almost imperceptibly, being in a dead faint. We looked at each other aghast. By what strange chance could she be masquerading in men's clothes, apparently alone, far from her husband ?

With a sudden thought Arthur caught up her left hand, and glanced at it, then at me.

"There is no wedding ring," he said. "Bride, I dare not stay another instant, and she is only fainting ; I will put her on your bed and you must deal with her."

CHAPTER XIV.

"Oh, she's ta'en a horse, should be fleet at her speed,
And she's ta'en a sword, should be sharp at her need,
And she has ta'en shipping for Ralestine's strand,
To rescue Count Albert from Soldaurie's hand."

THERE was no great difficulty in dealing with Kathleen's physical condition, she was too full of youthful vigour to remain long insensible, but when she revived it was only to fall into uncontrollable outbursts of weeping like a frightened child. She expressed no surprise at finding herself in my care, and it was utterly impossible to win any explanation of her extraordinary and sudden appearance. She only cried the more, and all I could learn was that she was positively not married.

She sobbed herself to sleep at last, and I sat by her wondering unspeakably about her.

The events of the day had crowded so fast on each other I felt altogether stunned, and unable to comprehend anything clearly, and for once did not hear Arthur's entrance till he laid his hand on mine with an inquiry for Kathie. I told him of her condition, and he said gravely:

"Bride, it is my belief she knew her own heart too late, and came to find you at Dublin in the hopes of a reconciliation with poor Cecil."

This had never dawned on my mind, and the thought of what such a change of feeling would have been to Cecil was almost too sad for words, coming as it did on the fresh news of his death. I could not speak, and Arthur went on:

"Kathleen was not one to be restrained by conventional bonds. If at the very altar she changed her mind she would have declared it, and defied all the world, whatever the consequences might be. I suppose we shall know all in time, it makes little difference now he is gone. Ah! you women are at the beginning and end of all the trouble in the world."

It was unlike Arthur to speak so bitterly, but I knew how deeply he was suffering from the death of the man dearer to him than a brother, and answered him gently:

"Mr. Geraldyn would have defended you at any time, Arthur."

"He would not have been so reckless of his life had he cared to live; he might have saved me at less cost; it is that makes it so doubly hard," Arthur replied. "Cecil was more than daring; he was indifferent to self-preservation all through the day."

"Shall I write to his mother?" I asked, dreading the task, but thinking it might spare Arthur pain, but he said firmly:

"No, Bride, I am the one who must do it, though she will never forgive me for causing

her such a loss; still I am the last who saw him almost. As we left the bridge I turned for a moment to look at him; he was lying among the others with a smile on his face as if he were asleep; the wound had not disfigured him much."

Arthur had to return to his duties, and I saw him no more that night, but I could not help feeling there was truth in his words, and that if Kathleen had really been tempted by ambition and pride into accepting the brilliant position offered her, though she preferred Mr. Geraldyn, she had done a cruel wrong to both her suitors, and I was haunted by Major Sutherland's remarks about Mr. Geraldyn courting death openly, and altogether my thoughts were so troubled I was glad to fall asleep from weariness.

Next day matters seemed little better. Kathleen declaring herself well, would remain in bed no longer, but when she was up was silent and very unwilling to answer questions.

She told me that at the last both she and Lord Headland had, she thought, mutually discovered they were unsuited to each other; but it was so near the wedding day, he being a man who regarded the opinion of society, would have kept her to her contract, even though he had openly told her he foresaw she was not going to become all he wished, and was constantly drawing unfavourable com-

parisons between herself and a beautiful widow who had just appeared in society.

Uncle George was on a visit in the country, not to return till the eve of the wedding, and in a fit of despairing dread of the future, Kathie resorted to the desperate measure of running away, assuming the dress of a man partly to prevent pursuit, and partly as a protection in her hasty solitary journey.

Larry had left not only an old suit of clothes, but his foxhunter's uniform in London; so she took both, and finding we had left Dublin, easily passed as a young gentleman on his way to join Lord Mohurry.

She got safely through the country, having procured a horse, and actually accompanied some of the militia for a day's march undetected, her knowledge of the officers of the foxhunters enabling her to talk easily of them, but she dreaded their finding out her disguise, and professed herself under orders to push on fast.

She did not know that any soldiers were left at Tuam, so made straight for Castlebar, where she arrived in the middle of the encounter on the bridge.

Her only chance of safety was to fall in with the troop she apparently belonged to, and in the danger and confusion passed unnoticed, and charged with them, and when the route began, she followed Arthur, whom she recognized on the bridge, and in the utter

disorganization of the troops, could easily enter Tuam and track him home without being observed. The horse she fastened up beside some more belonging to the troop in a stable, trusting it would be cared for.

I had great difficulty in getting this from her; she stated facts as shortly as possible, and then relapsed into silence. I could not gather the actual cause of her fainting, and would only speculate whether she had listened in the passage, and heard Arthur tell me of Mr. Geraldyn's death, and was overcome by the shock, or whether she had realized that earlier in the day, having been in truth actually witness to his sudden end, and was overworn by the fatigue and the horrors she had seen. But she was silent on the subject, and did not even name him.

Arthur, too, was utterly unlike himself, and spoke rarely to her after a formal inquiry for her health. It would have been far more natural had he expressed surprise or even anger at her conduct, and impetuous as they both were by nature, there might have been hasty words, but soon it would have ended in peace, for they had been as fond of each other as if they were really brother and sister; but this cold formality seemed like the interchange of insincere forced courtesy, during an armed truce, and I felt more unhappy than words could describe.

Kathleen appeared, however, utterly in-

different, if indeed she was conscious of Arthur's change to her, and it was clear he felt her in some measure responsible for the sad end his friend's daring had brought him to, and could not forgive her. And it would be utterly impossible in the unsettled state of the country for her to go to Ballydorough; so I felt the outlook was most dreary, and hailed gladly a message from the doctor that he wanted help badly.

Kathleen's presence was so far not known to others, and the doctor, of course, fancied I was unoccupied, so thought I might assist him.

Arthur came to tell me, and said it was Major Sutherland for whom I could do a little. There were not many wounded, for a large proportion died at Castlebar; but everything was in disorder, little adapted for their comfort, though the best that could be contrived had been arranged.

Major Sutherland was suffering a great deal, irritable and feverish, his servant, though well-meaning, was clumsy, and could do nothing to please him, and the annoyance increased his fever. Much against his will he submitted to my company, declaring himself utterly unfit to see a lady; but I was not so shy where I knew there was suffering to relieve, and there were many little things could be contrived for his comfort. He was badly wounded in the shoulder, which, com-

bined with the broken leg, made it hard to arrange his pillows so that he could find any rest; but I had been so much practised during Arthur's illness that I was more successful than the servant had been unaided, and I had by good luck, a few lemons which were invaluable for the wounded, thirsty with fever. And at last he was easier and could talk, and I told him how glad I was to be of some use to him, for just now home was so sad that I did not like thinking about it, and then remembered he knew nothing of Kathleen's arrival, but he only said:

"Gordon has been here, about as like a mute at a funeral as could be. When he is my age he will not take the fortunes of war so much to heart. One can't be always on the winning side."

"It's losing his friend grieves him so," I replied.

"David and Jonathan reversed, is it not? When I was a boy my mother used to tell me those things, but I forget them. It was the fellow who was ruddy and of a fair countenance who survived, was it not, Mrs. Gordon? Poor Geraldyn! he fought like a Paladin, certainly. Well, it was the best fate for him."

"He was so young to die."

"Therefore beloved of the gods! You know the saying? Honestly, he was the one in a thousand who would not have consoled

himself; the other nine hundred and ninety-nine invariably bewail their woes and find a less cruel fair one, or wait till the fair one becomes less cruel, but Geraldyn was a one-idea'd individual, and having missed his mark would never have tried again."

With the consciousness of the success that might have been Mr. Geraldyn's had he lived, I did not know how to answer, and was glad that the major wanted some more lemonade and one or two other trifles and forgot the subject. He was such a hot-tempered, masterful man that he was a very bad subject for illness, and I feared it would go hard with him; but though he wanted a dozen things at once, and made scant apology for giving trouble, when the time came for me to leave him, he made me promise to come on the morrow, and said he should have one thing at least to look forward to, if I gave my word to come.

Mr. Saville had Mr. Hunt and Mr. Green in hand. The latter was no Spartan, but shed actual tears whenever the doctor had to hurt him. I stayed a little with them also, while Mrs. Saville went to her rooms.

Unluckily she and the major were not such good friends that he cared for her company, for she was rather prone to lecture, which was a pity, for she was an excellent nurse.

At home matters mended little, if at all. Arthur preserved the same polite coldness to

Kathie, and, what was worse, stayed away as much as possible, and spoke little enough even to me, though he was tender and considerate to me as usual. He said nothing more of his friend, though I saw how hard a task it was to write to Lady Geraldyn, but he did not offer to show me the letter, which was very unusual, for we had lived in such confidence until now.

There were all sorts of rumours daily as to the movements of the French. Some said they would follow up their victory and attack Tuam; others that they had marched to attack Lord Cornwallis, who was supposed to be at Hollymount. The mounted patrols were the only means of communicating between the two divisions of our army. Besides our regiment at Tuam there were some of the Reo Fencibles, and the Armagh Regiment, and a few of Lord Mohurry's Foxhunters; but a good number had actually gone as far as Athlone, and Larry was with them, to my regret, for I missed his bright face and gay nonsense just now unspeakably.

Food was not plentiful, and it required some ingenuity to cater acceptably for the wounded who had little appetite. Luckily my Irish tongue stood me in good stead. Kathleen took her share of home work mechanically and without interest, but would not go outside the door, possibly on account of her dress. I had procured her a dark

striped country skirt, but she still wore the foxhunter's jacket, for I had no time for sewing, and my dresses would not fit her at all.

Even Mrs. Saville did not know she was with me. I had not told her at the first, and it grew harder daily to say anything of such a strange arrival, which would naturally astonish every one very much.

CHAPTER XV.

"Oh, my own love, and my lost love,
And my love that loved me so,
Is there never a chink in the world above
Where they listen for words from below?"

Some days passed with little variety, except that food grew scarcer. There were still common provisions for the strong, but I was puzzled to devise anything to take when I went to the wounded, especially to the major, who had been, as I anticipated, very ill, and to Mr. Green, who was rather fastidious. However, at last one day I was very fortunate in discovering an old woman with some cleverly-concealed poultry, which I purchased at high price, and though they were old and tough, they made soup, such as I had been unable to provide lately, and I was very pleased to be able to take some when at the usual hour I went to the major. To my surprise he was playing cards with Arthur, and I congratulated him on his amendment.

"This fellow never has anything to say nowadays, so in self-defence I ordered him to play piquet," replied the major.

"What gratitude," said Arthur, "when I came specially to tell you the reinforcements

are coming up to-night, and we are to retrieve our laurels at once, thank goodness."

"Well, it is something to hear there is to be work doing, even when one is tied by the leg," replied the major.

"Will Larry be here to-day?" I exclaimed, delighted at the thought.

"Yes, I hope so. It will be good to hear his rattle once more," Arthur answered, more in his old tone. "He will be starving as usual, Bride."

"And I can feed him," I said triumphantly. "See, Major Sutherland, I have really something nice for you to-day. I found an old woman with chickens in her bedroom, and so I bought all the eggs and made soup of the hens."

"That laid the eggs?" asked the major. "Was not that rather like the fable of slaying the celebrated goose?"

"Ah, not at all. I only cooked those that were too old to lay any more."

"You will rival the French cook who made *entrées* out of his master's old boots," Arthur said laughingly. "Well, major, as the wife is here you can dispense with me?"

"Certainly, my good fellow. With Mrs. Gordon here I can forego any one readily. She is a host in herself."

Arthur went off, and I waited on the invalid's meal, which he was glad enough of, being convalescent to the point of needing

food often if it was such as he could relish.

"Gordon is a degree better company since there is a prospect of action," the major said presently. "But he can't get over the loss of his inseparable yet. It is strange how those schoolboy likings cling to men through life."

The talk between us drifted on to other things. Through all his somewhat hard view of everything a kindliness showed itself often, and I wondered how I had once been afraid of the major, for we were good friends now, and he seemed to like to lay and listen to all the little news I could collect to amuse him. I could talk to him now as easily as if he were Larry, and though he treated me with all courtesy, somehow there was a spice of protectingness about it as if I were a child.

I stayed longer than usual, and could not pay my other visits quite at the proper time to let Mrs. Saville off, but she did not complain, and I hastened home, when the return of the soldier-servant set me free also, with a pleasant sense of something to look forward to more cheerful than usual now to us, in the shape of Larry's arrival.

I knew it was probable Arthur's hospitality might extend to others, so Anty was bid to prepare lots of potatoes, scones, and such things; and the elderly hens were set on to stew themselves into as small resemblance to

the historical boot as their leanness and sinews permitted, and everything being in train, I went into my room to mend my dress, which was rent.

The evening had set in cold and rainy, indeed for several days the weather had been more like November than early autumn, and the wind whistled sadly round the house; but in our sitting-room a turf glowed on the hearth, and by its red light even the shabby furniture looked better. Kathleen sat on a bench by the fire, her great violet eyes fixed dreamily on the red-hot mass, her white hands lay clasped on her knee idly, and her head was drooped a little as if by a weight of care or sorrow.

Presently the door opened suddenly and Arthur entered; he asked for me, and Kathleen explained my occupation, and asked if he wanted me.

"No, I do not," he replied shortly. "As we are alone, Kathleen, I wish to receive from you some explanation of your extraordinary conduct in running away from my mother's house, and risking life and reputation as you did?"

"I have explained my motive for thus quitting Lady Rachel's roof," replied Kathleen quietly. "I left her a letter to apologize and convey my gratitude."

"You have not truly explained your reason, Kathleen, for you have never stated why you

did not go home, which was the fit and only place for you to take refuge in."

Kathleen's eyes flashed angrily.

"I never imagined you would begrudge me food and shelter," she exclaimed. "But since you show me so plainly that I am unwelcome I will force myself on you but for to-night. I can find my way home as I did here."

I stood listening, and quite at a loss whether to interfere, for between husband and sister I knew not what to do.

Arthur responded sharply:

"Do not talk nonsense, Kathleen; you know that I will permit no such folly. I am answerable to your father for you now, and any relative of Bride's would be welcome to the best hospitality I can give. This I will know, though; did you forego your marriage with Headland because at the last love conquered your pride, and you realized that Cecil Geraldyn was dearer to you than your accepted suitor?"

This plain question struck home. Kathleen started up and faced him with flashing eyes, exclaiming angrily:

"How dare you question me like this, Arthur? What has this to do with you?"

"Cecil was my dearest friend," replied Arthur, with his eyes fixed sternly on her face. "I wish to hear whether you sacrificed him deliberately to your pride, knowing what

pain you cost him, and came here for sheer caprice; or whether you honestly regretted an error and trusted to be able to make some reparation?"

"Mr. Geraldyn is dead, and I will not bear this from you or any other man," Kathie returned, drawing herself up proudly. "Spare your questions, I will answer none of them."

Arthur looked at her for a moment as if he would read her very soul.

"I am answered," he said coldly. "From folly or worse you have thrown away one honest man's heart on the very eve of marriage. You were shameless enough to come straight back to try and torture another, whose one fault was loving such a cold, false woman too well."

Kathleen was too indignant for speech. I thought Arthur had gone too far, and stepped forward to interfere, when, coming in sight of the door from the passage into the parlour, my very blood was frozen in horror, for in the doorway stood Cecil Geraldyn's ghost, white, ghastly, with the fatal wound on the temple, the fair hair and uniform all blood-stained, and his hollow eyes fixed on Kathleen with a despairing agonized look as of a last farewell.

Arthur, who faced the door, apparently saw nothing strange, the awful figure was visible to me alone.

Suddenly Kathleen's pride gave way, she broke into piteous weeping. Even this did not soften Arthur; he said sarcastically:

"You can regret your lost lover when he is out of reach; could he return you would show him no mercy."

"That is all you know!" she cried passionately. "I tell you, then, I found out too late that I loved Cecil Geraldyn with all my heart, and if the dead can hear——"

Her sentence was never finished, the wraith-like figure that terrified me so caught her in its arms. And Arthur, still not seeming to notice it, strode by Kathleen into my room, and shutting the door, was going to say something, but at sight of my scared face he cried:

"My darling, are you ill?"

I clung to him trembling, and gasped:

"Arthur, what is it in there with Kathie? or did you not see it holding her as you passed?"

Arthur looked at me for a moment in utter dismay, evidently very much startled at my speech and thinking me beside myself; then drawing me on to his knee, held me there, laughing heartily.

"Poor little woman! Did you really fancy we had conjured up Cecil's ghost? No, no, darling; thank God, it is himself, alive and safe."

"But I saw the wound through his head; how can he be alive?"

"*On* his head, dear. That is the mistake we all made."

"I thought you did not see him in the door," I persisted, still unconvinced.

"I saw him, of course, dear, but I was determined to force an admission from Miss Kathie of one sort or another that he might know his fate; he is not fit to bear much uncertainty."

Seeing I was still incredulous Arthur went on:

"You are not the only one scared by his apparition, Bride. I had been to the sentries, and was talking in the street to some officers, when a soldier rushed up to say that Mr. Geraldyn's corpse was coming on a donkey. We all at first sight thought it a trick of the enemy to insult us, for he came straight on by us, with his eyes fixed as if he were dead, and when suddenly he turned his head, I swear we were all as frightened as you were for the moment."

Arthur went on to say, at first Mr. Geraldyn seemed hardly to recognize them or know anything, then when carried into Major Sutherland's room, broke down altogether, which completely nonplussed the younger men, who were as helpless as usual under the circumstances, and could only propose to find the doctor. But the major, who had seen men brought low by suffering before, said promptly, the doctor was absent, they might be an hour

finding him, and that Arthur had better take his friend at once to me, adding:

"Mrs. Gordon will see at a glance that he is utterly worn out, and starved; he only wants care and kindness, poor boy."

"I never felt in such a difficulty," Arthur went on. "I could not then and there explain to every one that Kathie was here, so it was impossible to refuse to take charge of Cecil, especially as he implored me to do so, and in desperation I just came straight out with the whole business on my way here with him."

"What did he say?"

"It acted like magic. He revived in a moment and declared he knew she would return to him; but when we got here his spirit failed, and he vowed it was just life or death to him to know the truth, and he could not ask her, so forced me to undertake the office—a pretty thing to have to manage. I'll swear it's my first and last essay."

"Do you not think Mr. Geraldyn ought to have something to eat?" I said, a practical question which seemed to amuse Arthur greatly.

"Bride is herself again; rejected or accepted, it is her creed that lovers require feeding."

"Love is exhausting according to Larry. It seems my inevitable fate to have Mr. Geraldyn to look to if he ails anything,

and as he is really in the flesh and starving——"

"Kisses are hardly support enough," interrupted Arthur. "Really I doubt if even Larry's ghost could have helped itself to them more liberally than he seemed doing, and Kathie was too startled to resist."

Mr. Geraldyn turned from Kathie to meet me, flushed, radiant, triumphant; he was unnaturally handsome for the moment.

"Do you know you have scared me out of my wits? I took you for a ghost," I exclaimed. "What have you to say to me after that, Mr. Geraldyn?"

"That I will not be called Mr. Geraldyn any more, I am your brother now, just as much as Larry, and I will have my brotherly rights too."

And so saying he gave me half a dozen kisses at least.

"Go on, Cecil, do not be shy," said Arthur with an air of mock resignation. "Let me beg you to make yourself at home. Are those fraternal rights to be extended to me, or will you wait for Larry?"

"Ah, where is Larry?"

"Coming, I verily believe."

For there was a hasty rush up the street, our door was burst open, but the new-comer was the doctor, panting and breathless with his run.

"Beg pardon, madam," he gasped, "have

rushed all the way to check Geraldyn—I know you ladies—in the excitement of a man reappearing like this—you just let him have anything he asks for—he can't be expected to have prudence or self control—is carried away by the feeling of the moment—and regrets his folly for the rest of his life."

This extraordinary address took me utterly by surprise. Mr. Geraldyn looked very angry, and glanced first at Arthur and myself, and then at Kathleen, who had dropped on to a low stool in a corner and grew crimson; there was a pause, then Mr. Geraldyn said haughtily:

"Really, Doctor Probyn, you are forgetting yourself. What may this unwarrantable interference with my private affairs mean?"

"Ah, light-headed, poor lad!" ejaculated the doctor; and Arthur, who could hardly speak for laughing, exclaimed:

"My dear fellow, the doctor's not inquiring about your heart, but——'

"Heart, God bless me no!" cried the doctor briskly. "I'll swear that's not touched. Why, Kavanagh, when did you get here?" he added, as a gleam of firelight fell on Kathie's face. Without pausing for a reply from her he went on, "Do not you go mistaking now, Geraldyn, and fancying your heart is really affected; because in the suddenness of return I daresay there's a palpitation and so on. It

will all pass away, it is only the effect of sheer emptiness."

We had all seen the absurd mistake by now, and astonished the doctor yet more by laughing with Arthur, and Kathie seized an opportunity of slipping away into my room.

"Eh, what, petticoats? It was not Kavanagh!" exclaimed the doctor. "Ah, whew—I see—Anthony Probyn, write yourself an ass. Of course there's a woman in it, but how the deuce she got here——" Then, noting a change in Mr. Geraldyn's face, he whispered hastily, "Quick, brandy and eggs or something, anything that's nearest; it's only excitement keeping him up. Here, Gordon, put an arm round him."

Mr. Geraldyn was grasping a chair back for support, and Arthur laid him down on a couch I had extemporized with benches for Kathleen. I thought he would be eager for food, but he was too famished and said faintly:

"I can't swallow, I don't want anything."

"Nonsense, man," said the doctor, authoritatively; "you must swallow, you're deadly sick and faint, just because your waistcoat buttons are rattling against your backbone."

Thus urged Mr. Geraldyn with great difficulty overcame his dislike and obeyed, then after a slight inspection of the wound on his head the doctor signed to me to follow him out of the room, leaving Arthur in charge.

"I shall see him again to-night," he said. "You will just feed him in the same way till he is strong enough to go to bed."

"But must you go directly? Suppose he is worse, how shall I know?"

"Oh, you will see. Now, Gordon, is he alone?"

"Not exactly," said Arthur smiling, and letting the doctor see his patient through the crack of the door. Kathie knelt by his side, she looked anxious; but Mr. Geraldyn had raised himself a little and the radiant look of joy was on his face once more.

"Ah! the old thing, a case of 'live for me, Charlie,'" said Doctor Probyn. "I had a patient dying one day, a fine, handsome young man too. He had not ten minutes to live—blue, collapsed, death rattle beginning—when in comes a pretty woman, plumps down by the bed on her knees. I tried to stop her, thought she was disturbing his last moments with her 'Live for me! Oh! live for me, Charlie!' Hang me if he did not come to, and they've ten children now."

"By Jove, he lived to some purpose," Arthur remarked. "I suppose it's not an inevitable sequel, though? But to return to the present case, the lady is doing him no harm?"

"Harm?" said the doctor. "If those eyes of hers can't bring a fellow back from the other side of death's door, why,

he's not worth fetching, that's all. *I'd* come."

"I say, doctor, doctor, we'll be off to our business after that," Arthur said laughing, and as he lingered a moment to say he would send his servant to help in case I wanted, the doctor gave a very audible aside of:

"How the deuce that girl got here passes me; seems to have dropped from the clouds. I'll worm it out of Gordon;" then in business-like tones he added to me:

"You understand—eh? Caution—keep the muzzle on him; fellows die every day from imprudence after fasting. That's what fetched me up in such a deuce of a hurry to look after him; fancied you might be giving him salt beef or something equivalent to poison."

"And a pretty confusion you made of it, doctor," said Arthur.

"*You* did, you mean. How was I to know the fellow had found his sweetheart?"

And as he hastened off the last sound I heard was:

"Where on earth is Headland, I wonder?" and Arthur followed him with a parting injunction to me to take care Kathie did not tease Mr. Geraldyn.

The most heartless coquettes would have abstained from teasing a man so prostrate as Mr. Geraldyn was, now the stimulus of excitement had passed away, a mere wreck of himself in appearance, reduced to almost a

skeleton. So great a change in the short time he had been missing could only, I felt, have been brought about by severe hardship.

Kathie was apparently too shy to do anything for him, and so absolutely silent it was impossible to judge of what she thought; but though still oppressed and hardly able to speak from the deadly sickening weakness of starvation, he was bright and so eager to rally that I guessed his happiness would be the most potent restorative, and he lay gazing at Kathleen, content to realize that the love he had so passionately striven and longed for was his at last, just as it seemed to have passed out of his reach for ever.

He was evidently too weak to think of the means by which so sudden a change had been wrought. Kathleen was there and nothing else mattered to him. I doubt if he even marvelled how she had got to Tuam.

I had to disturb his dreams rather often to administer the necessary food, and though the effort to take it was still trying he endeavoured to laugh at his own discomfort, and declare it was as cruel as offering hot pork to Mr. Smith on the transport. But by degrees the remedies were telling on him, and I could venture to leave him and get my writing case, and begin to write to Lady Geraldyn on the chance of there being an opportunity of sending the note with the despatches, as she might thereby be saved much sorrow, for she

was so devoted to Cecil, and so were his sisters, especially little Joan. He made an effort to add a few words, but failed and could only sign his name to a couple of lines written at his dictation. However, he was improving faster than I could have hoped, and becoming less averse to food, so I sent Kathie to heat some soup for him. When she was gone he caught my hands eagerly saying:

"Tell me I am not dreaming. Can Kathie indeed be mine?"

"How should I know?" I replied laughingly. "First you scared me to death by appearing like a spectre, then you nearly faint and I dare hardly leave you for a minute; can you expect me to answer for Kathie's ideas about you also? Possibly she may admire the half-starved object you have become; I prefer your usual appearance."

"Oh, I must look awful," he exclaimed, "I have not washed my face for a week."

"So I should think. Will I get you a looking-glass? You will hardly know yourself."

"I wish I was sure if I'm myself at all," he said; "but I can't think, somehow it makes me dizzy."

There was a very manly tread in the passage as he spoke, and in came Mrs. Saville.

"I must come and see Geraldyn before I can believe my ears," she exclaimed. "My dear boy, it is really no fable! Well, I'm as pleased as if somebody had left me a fortune. There,

don't try to move, my poor dear fellow," she went on as he tried to sit up ineffectually. "You have suffered, I can see; never mind, we will soon have you round again. I declare it's worth a good deal to see Gordon like himself, he has just fretted his heart out about you. When he came in to tell me you were back he hardly knew how to be happy enough, and the men were nearly as pleased."

"Every one is very good to me," Cecil said gratefully with his blue eyes shining with pleasure.

Kathie came back with the soup just then, and Mrs. Saville started at her appearance and fixed a very wondering gaze on her, but said never a word, and Kathie, taken aback by her presence, handed me the soup in silence and retreated to a corner by the fire; but Cecil's eyes were so expressive as they followed her that a knowing look of amusement dawned on Mrs. Saville's face. However, she only supported him in her strong motherly arms to let him drink the broth, and then producing from a most capacious pocket, scissors, lint, and strapping, proposed to dress the wound on his forehead. While it was being attended to, which was a tedious business, he told us he had been nearly starved to death, having literally had almost nothing since his breakfast at Castlebar; but he was still too languid to say much, and when I proposed his going to bed as the servant had come to wait on

him, he begged to be left quiet, "At least if I am not in the way lying here," he added. "But I do dread moving again; I feel as if I had been on the rack; I have had pains from head to foot lately, and they are bad just now."

Mrs. Saville's experience in illness enabled her to pronounce this the effect of exposure to wet and cold and long protracted fatigue, and she prescribed rest and warmth as the best remedies. And questioning also elicited that he had several slight wounds on the back, which, he said, had been given to goad him on to walk quickly.

"Why, you have been in the hands of the enemy!" I exclaimed.

He assented, and Mrs. Saville bade him make no attempt to tell us more, and covered him over with a gentle hand, saying:

"I know you have all you want, so I will return to the others now."

"All I want, and far more than I deserve," he said gratefully, looking towards Kathie.

Mrs. Saville bent down and gave him a motherly kiss, then turned away hastily and said to me outside:

"I am an old simpleton; but for a moment the boy was so like my Dick."

Dick was her only child, who had died years before, just as he reached manhood, and she rarely alluded to him.

Not knowing what to say, I slipped my hand into hers, and, wiping away a tear, she pressed it warmly, then said:

"Use your own wits, child. Do not send that poor fellow to bed, even if Probyn ordered it, unless he wishes to go. He has had a bad time, depend on it. Why, there is not a pound of flesh left on his bones! Just leave him alone with that pretty girl; she will teach him to forget it soonest. How did you smuggle her in? I'll swear she is Larry's sister, so I suppose she is yours."

I stood silent, not knowing how to explain, and, noting my confusion, Mrs. Saville went on:

"There, never mind; I see there is a mystery. Good-night, my dear."

She marched off, and I went to arrange sundry matters in the kitchen till Kathie came and asked me anxiously to come to Mr. Geraldyn.

"He is asleep," I said, after a glance at him. "What did you think? That he had fainted?

"I did not know," she replied; "he looks so ill."

And coming to the table where I had seated myself to do some necessary mending of Arthur's linen, she watched me silently for some minutes, then, with a sudden movement, was at my side with her head buried in my lap, sobbing.

I caressed her fondly, and bade her not be anxious, Cecil would soon be better.

"It is not that," she sobbed. "Bride, you are married——"

"Yes, dear?" I said, as she paused.

"Ah, then, I want to know. You must understand the men by now. Will he despise me because I said I loved him? And, maybe, he was not wanting me any more, but just felt bound to have me now. Oh, I hate Arthur for driving me to it."

Naturally I had to make her understand Arthur was in the right before I would hear any more, and presently she went on:

"Bride, tell me now; when we went to London you were no more of a fine town madam than I was."

"Nor did I learn their ways half so readily. What then?"

"Well, did Arthur lose all patience with you, and scold you if you did what was not just to his liking?"

"Never!" I said indignantly. "He just set me right, if needful, with a jest or a loving word of caution, and that rarely."

"Ah! when I was once engaged, it seemed I could no nothing right for Lord Headland. Hour by hour he schooled me and lectured me till I hardly dared speak, or look, or even move. He had protested he admired me because I was unlike what he was accustomed to, and then he made my life miserable

in bringing me to the exact pattern of the rest."

"Was that why you parted?"

"He grew so dissatisfied because I could not alter my nature that his father even saw it and pitied me. He spoke to Lord Headland, and bade him not curb me so, or I should rebel at the last. But it was no use. Headland wearied me to death by quoting Lady Priscilla Lloyd to me, till I told him he should have chosen her instead."

"What did he reply?"

"He was vexed, and said: 'I did not see her while I was free to choose.'"

This story proved Kathie less to blame than I had thought her. There would have been little happiness in such a match, for she was not to be coerced so readily, and Lord Headland, like many another man, having chosen her for her fresh originality, set to work promptly to force her into a formal mould, and efface the pretty, quaint ways which had made her so charming; for, like all men who are slaves to public opinion, he dreaded his wife being unlike every one else, and preferred decorous dulness, if it conformed to rule, rather than the daring brilliancy which had attracted him almost against his will when Kathie was the belle of the town, and yet to be won.

Possibly there were many envious of Kathleen's success who were clever enough to work

on his mind; his sisters, too, like himself, were somewhat fond of precision and form, though good and kind at heart, and influenced him all unconsciously, and so the dissatisfied feeling grew on him; and though Kathie conscientiously tried to do what he wished, she was like a caged wild bird under such control, pining for freedom and the petting she had been accustomed to; and gradually but surely her eyes were opened to the fact that pride, not love, had influenced her, and she had thrown away what she really prized in scornfully repulsing the lover who adored her just for what she was, and would not crave to mould her to his own fancy. However, she believed herself doing right in keeping to her betrothal, till the speech about Lady Priscilla startled her into the discovery that to marry Lord Headland was a grievous wrong to him as well as herself, for he was also holding himself bound in honour, though his heart was inclining to another who was probably better suited to him.

So she, being a child and not a woman of the world, felt it easier to run away than face the necessary explanations, and the anger of Lady Rachel at such a *fiasco*, and having money which Uncle George had given her to buy jewels, she managed to carry out her scheme successfully. Lord Headland had permitted so little intercourse with the Geraldyns that she did not even

know Cecil was in our regiment, for of course I did not name him in writing to her, and now she was shamefaced and miserable, thinking he would consider her forward and unmaidenly, and a hundred other things, for taking him at his word.

"At his word?" I said, puzzled by the remark, and Kathie, blushing, drew out a tiny crumpled note of a few lines which said he feared she would never forgive him, but that if, at the very last even, she changed her mind she would find him till death still faithfully and unalterably hers.

"It was given me by little Joan, but she would answer no questions about it."

"He must have sent it from Dublin to the child," I exclaimed, recognizing the paper that indeed had been borrowed from myself one day when Mr. Geraldyn was writing in our rooms, and had said he was scribbling to his small sister. Kathie did not know. The little one, who would have done anything in the world to please her favourite brother, had slipped it mysteriously into Kathie's hand when exhibiting herself in her bridesmaid's dress.

Time was going by, and the supper-table still unset, so we began to prepare it noiselessly that the sleeper should be undisturbed —though even Kathie, amid all her anxieties, could not refrain from a laugh at our expedients. Lady Geraldyn's parting present had

been invaluable, and silver plates and goblets adorned our table, but their number being limited, we had to make up with the commonest cracked Delft, and tumblers being unknown, and even mugs scarce, we added a common horn drinking cup or two, and the candles were stuck into bottles, other arrangements being equally primitive; however, hungry campaigners are not particular, and at least there was food enough and to spare, such as it was.

Just as we had finished Cecil woke with a sudden start.

"Ah!" he said, recovering himself, "I thought I was back in the ditch; thank God it was a dream."

"Are you feeling better?" I said.

"I should think so, indeed; almost well, I believe, and it seems hardly an hour ago that I could see no hope of escaping a lonely, painful, lingering death, and now——. How can I be thankful enough for it all?"

He rose and proved himself revived by walking across the room, and though still, of course, stiff and weak, declared he need not be sent to bed directly, at least if he could have a clean shirt and cravat, which I considered a sure sign of recovery, as a man must be fairly well to be solicitous over his attire.

Fortunately the servant had some of his clothes, and presently he reappeared in mufti, with his wound nearly hidden by his hair, and

altogether refreshed and brighter. Arthur returned soon after, saying Larry would be coming as he had nearly done all he had to see to, and that he had not been informed of Mr. Geraldyn's return purposely.

"I need not ask if you are mending, Cis," he added, laying his hand on his friend's shoulder. "It is good to see you in your old place."

"It is good to be in it, I know," Cecil said, looking up expressively.

Kathie brought in some bread just then, and Arthur caught her hands and looked at her mischievously, bringing the blushes up again to her face.

"I think I have had the best of it for once in my life, Miss Kathie."

"Let me go," she said, stamping her foot petulantly. "Oh, I detest you, Arthur!"

"Do you indeed? I am so sorry; but at least I may ask you a question. Do you remember bringing me strawberries when I was wounded?"

"The day after you were brought back? Well, what of that?"

"Nothing particular; only you asked me that day what falling in love felt like; do you know now?"

Kathie's white neck even was crimson before she could free herself; but Cecil would not let her run away, which was her obvious intention, but drew her down gently to a seat

by himself, only in shadow; he was still chilly and glad to be in the full warmth in front of the fire, and I heard him whisper softly to her:

"*I* found out long ago, at any rate, Kathie."

In came Larry whistling a gay polka tune. Fresh from the outer darkness he did not see much at first, and exclaimed:

"Bride, how are you? Oh, this is foine, bedad it's cold to-night. Ah, we only want poor—Cecil!"

Larry stopped with open mouth and eyes, utterly thunderstruck.

"It is really myself, Larry, not my ghost," said Cecil laughing, and holding his hand out to Larry, who took it doubtfully, then shook it most vigorously, exclaiming, "By the powers, who would believe it? Are ye sure it's yourself, man? When did you come to life again? Mercy be good to me, if here is not Kathleen now."

And as she advanced to him, half bashfully, putting up her face for a kiss, he held her at arm's length and said severely, "Where is your husband?"

"I have not got one—yet," she replied, with a shy glance at Cecil.

"Where is your last one, then?" said Larry. "Oh, you may all laugh, but it's enough to turn any man's senses t'other side up to come back and find a fellow he saw shot through the head a week since alive and well, and

courting a girl who is married, and yet has not got a husband. How came you by a bride-cake, then, Kathie? I'll swear to that anyway, for we all ate it but Geraldyn there, and he didn't seem to care about it."

"The cake was ordered and sent away early," faltered Kathie.

Larry regarded her with a puzzled air for a moment, then was about to give her an embrace, but stopped short again and cried, "Well, if ever I saw the like! Pray, miss, who gave you leave to borrow my foxhunter's uniform? Have you got it all on now? No. I am glad you've part of a frock on, anyway."

"Bride, for heaven's sake stop Larry's mouth with some supper," said Arthur laughing; "he is becoming embarrassing. My dear fellow, ladies don't assume the garments you allude to before marriage usually."

"I suppose you speak from experience," chuckled Larry; "the rest of us being bachelors can't contradict you. Come, Kathie, I'll give you a kiss."

"I wonder if there's any other man living would have kept her waiting so long for the honour?" Arthur remarked aside. "Ah, doctor, that is right, just in time for supper."

"Glad to hear it. I've had nothing since breakfast but a biscuit as hard as a flint. I'll go and see Geraldyn first, though."

"Here he is, visible to the naked eye," remarked Cecil rising.

"Bless me! What, not in bed, sir! Oh, this savours of the forbidden science; you have never been cured so far by fair means. Come, let's hear exactly what you have been doing since I left you lying there. What an idiot I am; of course he has been doing what any fellow would under the circumstances!"

Whereat Larry laughed, but Cecil only said coolly:

"I have passed the time chiefly in eating and sleeping."

"Et cetera! Well, the *régime* seems to suit you, so I need not meddle. Supper? By Jove, it smells appetizing."

"Bedad, there's a great blessing, Bride, in having a sister who remembers an empty stomach is a bad travelling companion."

"A fact I have had occasion to realize in the last week," said Cecil.

"Been on half rations, Cis? So I should think to look at you. Why, we can pretty nearly see through you—as one does through a ghost."

"Have you seen many apparitions, Kavanagh?" said the doctor.

"Oh, sure, our house was haunted with a headless nun, that looked you in the face and sighed."

"I wish she'd appear to me," laughed Arthur. "How many tumblers of punch are necessary to insure seeing her?"

They laughed and talked gaily; in the

reaction from his depression Arthur was as full of spirits and nonsense as Larry himself.

Cecil said little enough, but his unutterable happiness could not be concealed. He had not yet sufficiently recovered to have any craving for food, and was glad to leave the table to make room for some more officers who came in to see him, and return to his couch. Supper being concluded he was called on to tell us of his adventures, and every one gathered about the fire glad of its warmth on so dreary a night.

Kathleen's presence had evidently astonished all the guests, though of course they refrained from showing it as much as might be. She kept at the opposite side of the circle from where her lover lay, sitting at my feet and nestling close to me, but for all her discretion there were some very tell-tale glances exchanged at the most interesting parts of the story.

CHAPTER XVI.

"For all behind was dark and drear,
And all before was night and fear;
How many hours of night and day
In those suspended pangs I lay,
I could not tell, I scarcely knew
If this were human breath I drew."

Cecil Geraldyn had no idea how long he remained unconscious on Castlebar bridge; when he recovered his senses, it was to find himself nearly buried under the corpses of friends and foes, and in a measure this proved some protection; for a band of savage, half-clad women rushed wildly about the bridge dancing with fiendish glee on the bodies of the loyalists, some of whom were not dead, as their groans testified; now and then one of these furies snatched up pike or sword to torture their victims still more.

Cecil at first felt dazed, and believed himself in some horrid nightmare; but soon his position dawned on him in all its terrors.

He could just recall the flash of the pistol in his face, and guessed on feeling the still painful wound on his forehead that he had been left for dead; whereas, in fact, it was merely a severe scalp wound, and he had been stunned by the force of it. From the exult-

ing cries of the rebels he knew that they were victorious, his friends doubtless in full retreat, and he personally supposed to be past help, for he was sure otherwise he would never have been deserted.

He tried at first with some success to counterfeit death; but at last in trying to rob him they found out that he was living, and he was forced to rise, and though almost too dizzy to walk his persecutors urged him on with their pikes, though not giving him very severe wounds; and from their talk he gathered that they were reserving him for further and far more cruel torture. Two or three private soldiers had also been found with life in them, and they were all forced to go together towards the outskirts of the town.

Cecil, who spoke French as easily as English, appealed to one or two of the Frenchmen whom they passed, but they were unluckily not men of rank, and did not take on themselves to interfere; and he was ordered to keep silence on pain of instant death—a threat enforced by another stab.

Just out of the town was a little shebeen, where already wild-looking savages were drinking. The prisoners were roughly pushed into an inner room while their enemies revelled in a mad carouse. One of the soldiers who could hardly drag himself along lay down on the floor; Cecil supported

him as best he could, but the man was mortally wounded, and his sufferings were speedily over; and with the prospect the rest had to face they envied him his escape.

Presently they were all dragged into the other room, and there saw what was to befall them; for on the fire was a cauldron of boiling pitch, ready for the manufacture of that horrible instrument of torture, the pitch cap.

There seemed no hope of escape; their foes were maddened to the utmost ferocity by liquor, the unsexed women even worse than the men, and the captives were all more or less weakened by wounds. The first victim was one of the soldiers; the hot pitch being duly spread on a band of thick paper was bound round his head, and then set light to. Maddened with the agony, he dashed aside those who were holding him, and in his frantic struggles flung one man into the fire, upsetting the pitch into the embers; in a moment it flamed up wildly, and flowing in a fiery stream on to the old dry floor boards, ignited them too. One of the men who held Cecil's arms let go, and seizing the opportunity he grappled with the other, and threw him by the wrestling trick he had once shown us, and making for the door ran out into the darkness, noticing, just as he quitted the hut, that the flames had reached the whiskey barrel, and looking back he saw a sudden outburst of fire, showing the spirit had ignited

and the house was doomed. The crowd rushed out for their lives, some of the most hardened following him; he made for the river, and, throwing himself in, dived. Several shots were fired by the sentries, but the dark, cloudy night saved him, he floated down till his failing strength forced him to land.

He had escaped for the moment, but wounded, wet to the skin, exhausted, and hungry, saw small hope for the future. He knew nothing of the locality he was in, and dared only travel openly by night, for every man's hand was against him, and detection would be death; but avoiding the natives meant starvation, a few half-ripe nuts and hedge-berries were all he could find, and this insufficient food seemed to aggravate rather than allay the pangs of hunger.

He had no idea how far the French had driven our soldiers, and determined to try and find his way to Tuam; but in the darkness often lost his track and found he had been walking in a circle, and unless utterly overcome by exhaustion, was in too great peril to sleep, for there were many bodies of men scouring the country, and he often escaped detection by the merest chance.

"Is starving as bad as it is described?" asked Larry.

"Worse, I think," replied Cecil emphatically; "up to a certain point, at least. I got

past suffering so much at last, and nearly light-headed."

He went on to say that, completely overcome with weakness, he crept into a barn and slept till awakened by voices, and found two little girls looking at him; he implored them not to betray him, and I suppose his condition touched their childish hearts, for they promised they would not, and one gave him a piece of coarse bread. They bade him hide there till night; and just as he was thinking of moving on, long after dark, he heard footsteps pattering and a whisper, and to his surprise one of the children had returned to fetch him to her hut, as the barn was to be used that night by some of the rebels as a meeting-place, and they would shoot him. He dreaded this being a trap, but almost too miserable to care, followed the little maid, and found she had braved a great deal for his sake, for she was very superstitious, and only her strong feeling of compassion had nerved her to face the darkness alone.

The cabin was a tolerably roomy one, and there he found other little children in bed, besides the second girl whom he had seen before; the two elder ones talked in Irish, and then bade him take off his uniform, which they hid away under a loose board, and giving him an old cotton jacket to put over his shirt and a night-cap, bade him get into bed with the children, and they would tell the men if

they came he was their sister home from her aunt's in Dublin, for she had light hair like his, and indeed they were all fair; their mother was dead, they told him.

Little Peggy and Kitty got into another bed in the wall, and in a very short time there was a tramp of feet outside, and voices demanded admission. A good many men came in and others remained outside; they talked to the girls, told them there were fugitives to be caught, and bade them keep a look-out; also told them their father was with the French at Castlebar.

One of the most ruffianly caught sight of Cecil and looked closer at him, but his fair, girlish complexion and bright hair saved him; the fellow merely remarked that was a fine colleen, and he should give her a kiss.

"Oh, I say, Cecil, sure you couldn't have put up with that at all," cried Larry.

"Considering I was unarmed—one man to a crowd, and moreover, for the little girls' sake, I should have borne it with resignation, I think," responded Cecil quietly. "Luckily, my admirer changed his mind."

Cecil remained in the cabin till dawn, when his little preservers bade him go before the younger ones were awake to see him, and because some neighbour would come to bring them food. He gave them all the money he had left, which was but little, for he had

been robbed on the bridge, and they were grieved at having nothing for him to eat but a couple of cold potatoes. However, they directed him how to get to Tuam, and declared it to be only a day's walk, and, following their instructions, he wandered on again, struggling against his fast-increasing weakness and the acute pains in his limbs. The longing for food was almost over, only returning to torture him at intervals, till he grew unconscious for the time with suffering, but still instinctively kept on walking till he came to a cross-road and knew he was but two miles from Tuam, but so utterly spent and weak that he might as well have been twenty, for overtried nature gave way and he laid down to die as he supposed.

"It was hard to feel there was no one here but would have come to me if you knew," he said smiling and laying his hand on Arthur's knee.

"Wouldn't we?" said several voices at once. "But go on."

"Just as I was longing for a sight of some of you, I heard steps and really believed that my wish was granted, but it was only an old jackass."

"The next best thing," remarked Larry.

"As it turned out, for I had just strength to get on him, and he was a sober beast and paced on straight, I suppose, but I knew nothing whatever clearly till I seemed to

wake up and find Arthur lifting me off, and several fellows talking all at once."

"Where is the old donkey?" I asked.

"In the stable with the colonel's horse, with such a feed of corn as he never saw before," said Arthur.

"I am glad of it, for he certainly saved my life. I shall keep him if I can," replied Cecil.

"You will be pleased to go to bed at once, Geraldyn," said the doctor, who had been watching him anxiously. "You are overdoing it, and will be too excited to sleep."

"Well, I would not object to turning in myself," said Larry. "Anyway, Cis, you can boast the hardest head in the regiment—first, it nearly scuttled the transport, now it has turned a pistol bullet."

CHAPTER XVII.

"There's nothing half so sweet in life,
As love's young dream."

The doctor paid us a very early visit, and reported that Mr. Geraldyn was wonderfully better, although, as I knew, he had been awake a great deal and restless.

"Cupid's the best doctor! I take it you and I, Mrs. Gordon, are but second to him," said the doctor. "If that lovely sister of yours were across the seas and a marchioness, our patient would put off recovery till it suited his convenience. Now he cannot mend fast enough. Well, the age of miracles is not over."

"Explain yourself, doctor. Is the marvel in all he bore without giving in?"

"No; those slight, wiry fellows endure twice as much as a great growing boy like Kavanagh, who can eat a horse behind the saddle and look for more; but the wonder is the ball did not go through his head; he must have swerved at the instant, so it only channelled round his skull instead of in, though I verily believe even that could have been cured by Miss Kavanagh. Well, well, I was young once."

"And in love, doctor?"

"Ah, you want to know too much, madam. Come, now, will you bestow some breakfast on me and give the patient some?"

Cecil greeted me eagerly, declared he was glad not to waste any unnecessary moments in sleep, when he could be thinking of Kathie instead, and was so absurdly extravagant that I told him to be sure it was not a dream, of which he had probably had plenty.

"Have I not? I dreaded sleep because I had to wake, and it was sickening to come back to this horrid world, when one had been in paradise, and find oneself late for parade and in for the rough side of old Stiff's tongue; but, thank God, this is reality, and oh, it's heaven, and she is an angel."

"I daresay; but you show no symptoms of growing wings yet, so as a mere mortal you must eat your breakfast, please, or you will not be fit to get up, and then your angel will be beyond your reach."

"Oh, I am quite well; what could ail me now? But oh, Bride, was ever any one so lovely before? What glorious eyes, and such a figure, so slight and yet so rounded, and have you noticed how transparent——"

"Be quiet, do," I said, stopping my ears. "As if I did not know Kathie's beauty by heart, long before we ever saw you, sir. Will you obey me and eat your breakfast at once?

if not, I will bolt your door outside, and you shall not see Kathie at all to-day."

"It would just kill me, and I know you could not be so cruel. Oh, if I had but known her years ago."

"When you were both in pinafores, and could have shared one sugarstick. How you would have quarrelled," I replied; whereat he declared me heartless, and although he had boasted of his recovery, nevertheless he was sufficiently weary and weak to be glad to have the room darkened and lie down to rest, and visiting him again later he had fallen asleep, and did not appear till midday, when of course his first inquiry was for Kathleen.

"Are you afraid the angel has made use of her wings and taken flight?" I asked. "It is with the prosaic purpose of trying to buy you some eggs, for Larry has made havoc among our stores to-day."

"I believe I can rival him, for my appetite has returned with a vengeance. Bride, tell me something. How came Kathie here at all? and why is she wearing that uniform?"

"You may just ask herself if you want to know, sir."

"I am right, then," he said triumphantly, "that was no vision, as I thought; she appeared to me just before the pistol flash; I might have been sure it was herself, my beautiful brave darling."

"Reserve all that for Kathie, unless you

want to get in practice before she returns, and tell me how you are now you are up."

"Very tired, and a good many aches," he answered smiling. "But all the sharp pain is gone; I expect I got it by walking so incessantly; I seemed possessed at last by an irresistible craving to move on."

"Perhaps it was from an instinct that you could not recover if you once gave in."

"Possibly, and I knew if my body were found so near, it would vex every one to think what a little help might have saved me."

"I really think it would have broken Arthur's heart," I said. "He could never have forgiven himself for having taken for granted too readily that you were dead; as it was, he was utterly miserable."

"Ah, if I could only tell you how I longed for him, when I felt at the worst, and almost past hope."

Cecil's eyes said more than his words, as he paused, then after a minute went on:

"To you and Arthur I owe all this happiness."

"We did not influence Kathie."

"No, but you influenced me; but for you two I would be in a suicide's or drunkard's grave by now; or, worst of all, unfit to take her pure, sweet life to mine, degraded as I should be by sin and folly. Ah, you do not know how desperately tempted I felt to it, when the pain grew unbearable, but somehow

Arthur seemed to see how it was though he never said a word, and when I could not save myself his kindness was like a strong hand holding me back, and I do not suppose you will ever realize what a refuge your home was to me."

Before I could answer Kathie came in, saying merrily:

"Only two eggs, not another to be had for love or money. And all the meat is an old goat, that Arthur declares is the very one that came out of the ark, and the mess-man is casting covetous eyes on the poor donkey, for there is nothing in the place at all, at all."

"I must lay claim to my ass," said Cecil laughing. "He is my prisoner, and I shall protect him."

"I must go to the major; I am late. Kathleen, can you remember to look after Anty's cooking?"

"Commission me, I'm a first-rate *chef*," said Mr. Geraldyn.

"You, Cecil?" I exclaimed.

"Yes, madam; don't look so contemptuous. Do you think I have been half my life in France for nothing?"

"I am of opinion that if I leave things to you two it will be a case of the cooks spoiling the broth; but I suppose at least Kathie will take care of you, so adieu."

Major Sutherland declared he should quarrel with me for not telling him of Kathie's mys-

terious arrival when he wanted amusing so much, but would have the whole story now, and exacted every minute detail, being just at the stage of recovery to like to have something to take his thoughts off himself.

"All's well that ends well," he said at last. "The knight-errant having gone through the orthodox adventures, wins the lady out of the very jaws of the dragon."

"Poor Lord Headland! What a simile."

"I really believe you are soft-hearted enough to take up the deserted swain, Mrs. Gordon," the major said smiling. "You need not; I know him very well, and you may rely on it, his *amour propre* is all that suffered."

"I am sure he was fond of my sister. Of course he admired her, but he is too much convinced of the value of the future Duke of Portishead to lower his dignity by falling head over ears in love; it *is* a foolish thing to do, but somehow I should like a look at Geraldyn. He will be so absurdly happy, so tell him to come to me."

Others were anxious to see Cecil, and later in the day he visited every one in the hospital, officers and men. He was a special favourite with the latter from his considerate kindness, and there was general rejoicing at his escape. Arthur was too busy to come home till evening, as further reinforcements were coming. When he did return, it was to announce they would march the next day but one.

"Hurrah! I shall be capable," said Cecil.

"That is as the doctor thinks."

"Oh, I am quite recovered to-night. Look now, Arthur, I want to speak to you seriously."

"Ditto," returned Arthur. "May I ask how you two are going to break your intentions to your respective relatives? I conclude you know your own minds by now."

"That is the thing I was thinking of, too, Arthur; and I am sure it would save a world of trouble for us just to marry to-morrow, and write and say it's done. Besides, it would be taking the responsibility of the care of Kathie off your hands."

Arthur burst out laughing.

"Considerate youth! I feel this ingenious suggestion is entirely prompted by the fear of my suffering over-anxiety at such a charge. There is only one slight drawback, which is, that you will not find a clergyman, even if other formalities were complied with."

"Can't the colonel marry us? I know ship captains can," said Cecil.

"He is awfully afraid you will slip through his fingers again, Miss Kathie," said Arthur mischievously. "But I doubt if even you can swim the Irish Channel."

Kathie's eyes opened to their widest. Then turning angrily to Mr. Geraldyn, she exclaimed impetuously, "Cecil, you didn't tell him?"

"No, I didn't," he replied calmly; "that I'll swear to."

"Tell him what?" asked Arthur. "Why should such an innocent statement bring your wrath on Cecil's devoted head?"

Kathie pouted, but would not speak.

Cecil remarked:

"Arthur is a relative to the Wizard of Carlton House, evidently."

"Certainly, nephew by marriage. Did you never realize that before?"

"No? Ah, well, on principle I never puzzle over the incomprehensible, but if the seer was really Mr. Kavanagh, I can put two and two together. This other point is beyond me, Kathie, for I give you my word I have been silent

Then seeing me laugh, he added:

"Unless when I was off my head on the transport I grew communicative, that of course I can't say."

"Not at all," I answered. "But, Cecil, next time you wish to propose to a lady on the river, row a little farther from the bank, or look under the fern first."

"Were you there?" he exclaimed, surprised.

"Yes, I was an unintentional eavesdropper; but I did not know how to interrupt you at such a moment, so you must forgive me."

Neither he nor Kathie minded anything just then, they were too happy. Kathleen would

indeed have been very hard to convince if she had not realized that Cecil worshipped her; but it was with a more true, fond affection than the first wild, ungoverned passion she had inspired him with, and he was the most devoted, chivalrous of lovers, anticipating her lightest wish, without making his attentions in the least remarkable. He had completely reassured her as to her doubts of what he would think of her conduct, declaring himself proud of her venturing so much for his sake, so she had recovered much of her brightness, though her looks and ways were softer.

Cecil's fashion of arranging matters was impracticable, even if we could have sanctioned such a hasty decision, so he was obliged to submit to delay.

We felt that father's remarks about him had, in a manner, given consent to the bridal, for he had said decidedly he would approve of him as a son-in-law; but how Lord Geraldyn would take it was another matter. We were almost cut off with regard to London letters, though my note to Lady Geraldyn had gone with some dispatches, and we trusted might reach her in time to save her much sorrow.

Kathie was convinced now that wealth and position were not necessary to her happiness, and did not shrink from Cecil's small income, which was indeed sufficient for comfort if they were careful managers.

To the last I fancy she hoped Cecil would

not be considered fit to go with the regiment, but he declared himself perfectly strong, and got his own way about it, so when the moment of parting came she sent him away without a tear, and was braver than I through the anxious hours that followed, until we each received a line, hastily scribbled in pencil, from their first halting-place, and sent by a horse patrol, and it was at least reassuring to hear Cecil was none the worse for his march, having borne it with wonderfully little fatigue.

Our next tidings were that Castlebar was deserted by the French, and many Irish had encamped in the bogs, or were wandering about about aimlessly.

The French passed the Shannon at Ballintra, blowing up the bridge behind them.

Lord Cornwallis kept his troops south of the enemy to intercept them in case they evaded General Lake, with whom was our regiment. He was marching on hastily and endeavouring to overtake the French, who on the third day were fourteen hours in advance of him, so he pushed on and encamped at Tubbercurry. And about eight miles off an action took place at Caloony, in which many French were killed, and the enemy, pressed hard, deserted their cannons and their wounded.

Our troops continued to harass them, and at length they surrendered at Ballynamuck. A happy result, chiefly owing to General

Lake's spirited conduct in pressing on so rapidly, and under such difficulties for food, for the enemy had committed wholesale de struction, and they had to subsist on potatoes which they dug up and cooked.

General Humbert, who commanded the French troops, complained bitterly of the treachery of their allies, the rebel party, who had deceived them into undertaking a fruitless expedition ; for though active exertions had been made to excite a general rising in all the adjacent counties, and arms were served out, few but the lowest class had joined the French, and they in their turn were disgusted at being treated with no consideration by the foreign soldiers.

For if men of better position incited the people to rise, few took active part, and in every direction terrible outrages were committed, in which the French took no part. Houses were wrecked and plundered and lives sacrificed, but of this we learnt more later.

Tuam was kept fairly well informed of the progress of the troops.

Rumour, indeed, there was that the rebels were likely to sack Killala in spite of all their allies the French could do to restrain them, and I was anxious for our good cousin the bishop, and very thankful to receive a line from Arthur to say that the King's troops had attacked and defeated the rebels, and carried the town with very small loss comparatively

to themselves, though the opposing force outnumbered them considerably, and that having made himself known to the bishop, he had been most hospitably received by him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave deserve the fair."

With the re-taking of Killala ended the rebellion of 1798. The rebel leaders were brought to justice, some transported, some executed, and as far as might be, those were recouped who had suffered loss from attack by rebels or even by our own soldiery, who could not always be kept in bounds.

The sum claimed altogether amounted to £823,517 6s. 4d. A detachment of our regiment was to remain for a time at Killala, so as soon as might be Kathleen and I were conducted thither. Our kindly relatives would not hear of our going anywhere but to the palace, and the bishop's account of the French invasion was graphic and interesting as noted in his diary.

The first alarm was given at a large dinner-party, it being the visitation day.

In the forenoon three men-of-war flying English colours had entered the bay, and among others the two young Stocks rowed out to see them and were promptly taken prisoners; but this was unknown till, as the gentlemen rose from their wine, a terrified

messenger announced the French were on them.

Some fifty yeomen and fencibles constituted the Killala garrison. They made a bold but useless resistance with some loss.

The French commander, Humbert, accompanied by the bishop's sons, demanded to see the worthy prelate, and while some quartered themselves on him, others appropriated his horses and cattle. The frightened women had also flocked to the palace, and were protected and cared for by Mrs. Stock and her daughter.

The invading force consisted of about 1,500 men, but they brought arms for at least 100,000 men besides themselves. Though they treated the bishop courteously he was forced to act as interpreter, and they held his sons and others as hostages. The bishop worked day and night, and his presence, no doubt, acted as a check on the invaders, who were amenable to him, and when he had been stripped of money and provisions shared their mess with him and his family. His younger son, Arthur, a lad of seventeen, was kept away and in danger for some days, being in at least one skirmish, but returned unhurt, though still a hostage on parole, and he was again carried away to Castlebar.

On the seventh day of their captivity they saw more French vessels pass and fire some deserted sloops, out of one of which the

French landed 30,000 tons of gunpowder, which they stowed in the bishop's yard, to the no small anxiety of him and his family.

Their greatest terror was, however, experienced when all the French, save Commander Charost, were ordered to quit Killala for Castlebar. The invaders were at least soldierly and under restraint; but the rebel Irish seemed possessed by the very spirit of wanton destruction, and spared neither persons nor property, and were, moreover, bitter to the point of insanity against all Protestants, which much astonished the French, who were by no means bigoted in their religious views.

Charost seconded the bishop in organizing a kind of volunteer police force to protect the respectable townsfolks who were, however, stripped by the French of all money, as well as being obliged to give their goods in return for promissory notes of hand.

Three weeks of this durance elapsed before any reliable news reached them from the outer world. Charost himself was completely in the dark as to the movements of his countrymen, with the exception of their victory at Castlebar, and another slight advantage near Drumshambo. At length the welcome sound of the Royalists' cannon heralded their arrival, and the desponding inhabitants began once more to hope for help.

Troops of fugitives, chiefly women and

children, poured into the town, seeking shelter where they could.

The rebels gathered in what seemed a place of great advantage behind stone walls ; but their mis-directed fire went over the heads of the Royalist army, who routed and pursued them right into the town with terrible slaughter.

The protector of the Protestants, Colonel Charost, was nearly murdered ; he had given up his sword to Colonel Saville, when an infuriated Highland soldier fired at him, but fortunately missed his mark, and means were immediately taken to put the Frenchman in safety.

Killala being a better town than Tuam, and far nearer than Dublin, our wounded were transported thither, and as some of the regiment were to remain, Arthur got permission to be left in charge, as the kind and hospitable bishop declared that the arrival of so many cousins nearly made amends for all they had undergone.

Arthur's scholarly tastes delighted him, and they spent many an hour together over the books in the library, though Larry's gay nonsense suited also, for Bishop Stock was no narrow-minded religionist, but a kindly, genial, practical man, able to sympathize with old and young, and, having boys of his own, knew how to deal with youthful overflow of spirits ; and his motherly wife took us all into her heart at once and made us as much at home as if we

were her own, especially rejoicing over the lovers, who were delighted to be reunited, naturally. Mary Stock, her daughter, was about my age, and a pleasant comely girl if not really pretty.

Kathleen's bright, saucy grace captivated them all, and the bishop quite fell in love with her, and turned a very lenient ear to Cecil, who finding him inclined to side with him, lost no chance of advocating the advantages of an immediate marriage, and at last arrived to declare triumphantly the bishop quite agreed with him and was willing to marry them, and act as father to the bride, who would be wedded from his house. "So now, Arthur, there is no reason to delay any longer," said Cecil decidedly.

"Where is the bishop? asked Arthur.

"He turned me out and said he had a sermon to write."

"Poor unfortunate man! No doubt his ideas were so utterly mazed by listening to you for the whole afternoon he was thankful for any excuse to get rid of you. I should think he might well be qualified to discourse on the parable of the widow who got her way because of her importunity," said Arthur laughing.

"Now, Mrs. Stock, I appeal to you," said Cecil, seating himself at her feet with his most persuasive caressing manner. "Is he not too bad, when I was only just giving my reasons as plainly and shortly as could be?"

"I wonder what time they would take, if stated at full length, Mr. Geraldyn?" quoth Mary Stock saucily; "it's just three hours ago you went to papa's room."

"Ah, not possible, Miss Stock. And I did not think you would take that big fellow's side against me," responded Cecil reproachfully. "It's fine for him to preach prudence when his own marriage was at twelve hours' notice."

The bishop came in at that moment to fetch a book, and paused, laughing at finding Cecil still on the same subject.

"You mistook your profession, Geraldyn; you should be a special pleader," he said.

"I just vote you tie him up out of hand, sir," said Larry, "for there'll be no peace for any one till you do; and if he bothers Kathie as he does the rest of us, sure she'll be just thankful to marry him to get rid of him;" an original view of matrimony which delighted the bishop immensely.

Persistent people generally get their own way, and Cecil was no exception to the rule.

There was, indeed, no absolute reason for delay. His father could do nothing for him in the way of money, and had always allowed his sons to do as they thought fit, being too easy-going to interfere.

Lady Geraldyn's ambitious views might be thwarted, but she was too much wrapped up in Cecil to really oppose anything that his heart was set on.

In these unsettled times, home was by no means the safe home it once had been. For though the spirit of rebellion was scotched temporarily in Ireland, it was not dead, and none knew when it would burst out again. War was threatening on the continent, and men wedded when they were free to do so, for at least they could protect their wives as long as might be, and, as the bishop pointed out, Kathie, with her bright, fearless spirit, was born to be a soldier's bride.

Good Mrs. Stock, too, was delighted with the idea of a wedding, threw herself heart and soul into the preparations, and finally brought out rolls of lavender-scented brocades and satins, and bade Kathie choose one for a wedding dress, for they were Kavanagh heirlooms, so fit wear for her. Kathleen, however, begged hard to be allowed to wear nothing more sumptuous than soft India muslin, and I knowing a splendid and fashionable wedding costume had been left in London, guessed she wished for something as different as might be. But she was so lovely in her simple attire; nothing could have made her more charming on her bridal day, and all eyes followed her as Arthur led her up the aisle of old Killala church, whose painted windows still showed traces of the siege, being much damaged by the rebels' bullets.

The dark oaken seats were filled with officers and soldiers—even Major Sutherland

was there, on crutches, out for the first time, and Mr. Hunt had been carried in a chair; the inhabitants of the town, too, were crowded in wherever there was standing room; and as the sunbeams strayed through the east window, throwing crimson reflections on Kathie's whiteness and turning her bridegroom's bright hair to gold, I wondered if there could be a prettier sight, for they were so charming in the gracious beauty of their youth: and the crowd cheered them as they left the church to the very echo, sympathizing with them almost as much as their friends could.

"I declare it is Arcadia, and we are witnessing the bridal of Prince Charming and Princess Beauty, surely!" said Major Sutherland smiling. "Of course they have retired in a car drawn by doves to live happy for evermore; it's impossible to imagine they will ever inhabit houses and eat dinners."

"Or wedding breakfasts," said the bishop, joining us. "Major, you are coming to the castle to rest after this exertion?"

"Well, I should like another peep at that pair," said the major; "so, though it's strictly against my orders, Gordon must just get me there somehow."

"Oh, we will manage that," said the bishop cheerily. "And it is not every day one sees the like, I declare. Geraldyn's face was a study."

"Yes," returned the major, who seemed unusually amiable. "What with the boy's bright colouring and his overpowering delight, he made one feel horribly discontented at being nearer the half-century than the quarter."

"And not having such a bride?" asked the bishop smiling.

"Oh, I am afraid we cannot all aspire to having a marquis thrown over for our sakes," said the major, as with Arthur's help he left the church for the castle, where our kind relatives had made a grand feast for the wedding guests.

CHAPTER XIX.

"I thank ye for your patience, gentles,
My tale is told."

KATHLEEN'S first months of married life were spent in Killala, in some quaint tiny rooms overlooking the wild, rocky coast, from which a splendid view could be obtained of the great Atlantic waves surging up on stormy days.

It was very different to the life of grandeur and luxury she had once dreamt of; but it would have been impossible for any one to be happier than she seemed always; and of Cecil's unspeakable pride and joy it is needless to write.

We regretted leaving Killala for head-quarters and parting from Bishop Stock and his family, though it was with many promises of letters and hopes of future meeting.

Mrs. Saville welcomed the new bride as kindly as she had done myself a few months ago, and Mrs. Hardy confided to every one in turn that she had reason to know that "poor Geraldyn was obliged to marry, for his wife positively ran away with him."

But as most men replied that they only

wished that they had been in Cecil's place, I fear she got little satisfaction.

It was long before leave could be obtained for us to visit Ballydorough or London. Indeed, Cecil's announcement of his marriage was the first news his family received of his escape, for my letter to Lady Geraldyn was lost—a mischance which often occurred just then—and she had mourned so bitterly for her darling son, that in the delight of what was to her almost a resurrection from the dead, she would have forgiven a far worse crime than a love-match with a portionless bride; and besides, in her secret heart I fancy she was pleased at his triumph over his wealthy rival, for it proved him in truth as irresistible as she believed, and so she wrote the warmest and kindest of letters.

That our mother should welcome her new son was just natural; but when at length she saw him, his winning, caressing ways procured him such an amount of petting from her, that Arthur declared himself quite slighted, and said he wished Kathie had kept to Lord Headland, who would certainly not have been a subject for the spoiling which somehow seemed Cecil's due.

Uncle George arrived at last, having been in England ever since Kathie ran away. We were all gathered in the old hall when he entered, and after greeting mother, he walked straight up to Kathleen and said gravely:

"Mrs. Geraldyn, I must impeach you of breach of trust. What account can you render of the moneys I put in your hands?"

"I am not guilty, uncle. I employed them as you bid me."

"Indeed, Niece Kathie, I must say that is too hard a nut for me to crack. I distinctly stated you were to provide yourself with jewels, and instead you elope to seek a husband."

"Well," returned Kathie, "so I did; and a real jewel of a husband he is too!"

Uncle took snuff deliberately, and remarked:

"Had a lady paid me such a compliment in my young days, I should have felt bound to salute her."

"Manners have not changed much in that respect, George," said mother, for Cecil was impressing his thanks on Kathleen's lips warmly.

From uncle we learnt that Lord Headland had consoled himself for Kathleen's defection by wedding Lady Priscilla Lloyd, the beautiful widow he had quoted so often as a model for her sex. She was rich, handsome, and well versed in the ways of the world, so it was in all respects a suitable match, and they speedily became leaders of the more decorous division of society; but when at length Cecil and his bride went to London, as their romance was still unforgotten, they were made much of for the time. and Lady

Rachel, finding Kathie once more in fashion, forgave her graciously. Lord Headland would have held aloof, but the two couples met everywhere, and by an ingenuous compliment on the choice he had made, Kathie succeeded in restoring him to a semblance at least of friendliness. The old duke, who had liked her from the very first, came to visit her almost on the earliest day of her arrival in London.

"You naughty girl, what have you to say in excuse of such behaviour—running away to marry that young gentleman? There, God bless my soul! I should have done it in your place. Come, you little rogue, I mean to have a kiss, whether Master Cecil there likes it or not;" and in saluting her he left a costly necklace round her throat.

"There, there, no thanks, my dear. You were all but a daughter of my own. Faith, I should not have let you slip through my fingers had I been in Headland's shoes."

"I am uncommonly glad you were not, sir," said Cecil, "for I should not have had a chance."

Whereat the jolly old duke chuckled, and Kathie told him he ought to be glad his son had married some one so much more suited to the dignities of the position.

"Dignified enough, my dear, and deadly dull and decorous, and as many other d's as you like. I declare I am afraid to hazard a

joke in the house. Ah, Lady Geraldyn, how d'ye do? I hope you have scolded these silly children thoroughly."

"I am afraid it would be waste of words, duke; they have certainly not begun to repent at leisure yet."

"Well, well, hark you here, sir; it's gross impertinence of a beardless boy, who has ridden on my cane a hundred times, to steal my daughter-in-law that ought to have been; but Gad, I admire your spirit, and just remember, lad, I have a little influence, and you shall not want a helping hand if I can get you anything, so you must send your wife to tell me what I can do."

"I doubt if that would be prudent, sir," laughed Cecil.

"Well, I will run away with her if I can. I give you warning," and off trotted the kindly old peer, and did not forget his promises. Partly through interest, but greatly from his own merits, Cecil rose rapidly in his profession, as he had declared he could, inspired by Kathleen; her bright-spirited temper kept him from ever relapsing into the soft indolence of his youth, and during the eventful campaigns of Egypt and the Peninsular he won both fame and fortune, so that in the end Kathie's marriage proved as distinguished as if she had wedded with Lord Headland. And I too had my full share of reflected glory; the two friends were rivals, but in valour, and

what was even more perhaps to those who loved them, they escaped death, though not wounds, and returned in safety from the glorious field of Waterloo, which was the last great battle of the time.

Kathie and I followed our husbands' fortunes far and wide over Europe, and our escapes and adventures delighted my fearless sister.

Good Mrs. Saville accompanied us till failing health forced her colonel to resign the post he had filled so long and so honourably. Many other friends died or left the regiment as time passed on, and others came to fill their places. One thing alone seemed unchanging, and that was the friendship between Arthur and Cecil, which neither time nor any other cause had power to weaken.

Larry went gaily through his campaigns, apparently as ready for a battle as a ball, and regarding both as "mighty foine divarsions." Every leisure-time he spent in falling in and out of love with charmers of all nations, each fresh face being, according to his description, lovelier than the last.

After the peace of 1815 he met Joan Geraldyn once more, then grown into a feminine counterpart of Cecil, and surrendered at once to her fair face and winsome ways.

The heroes of Waterloo were irresistible to all young ladies just then, and Joan would listen to no richer suitor but married Larry,

and made him an excellent wife, having inherited all her mother's bright cleverness and resource.

My tale is ended now. I have lived through many eventful years since 1798; but always when I look back to the past each incident of that time stands out more clearly than anything of later date; and though I am but a poor hand with my pen, and love the storeroom and stillroom better than my desk, at least I have tried to set down faithfully all I remember of that sad year; and if my story is a simple one and not interesting to many, at least it is true.

THE END.

PRINTED BY
KELLY AND CO., GATE STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, W.C.;
AND MIDDLE MILL, KINGSTON-ON-THAMES.